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UNICORNS

UNICORNS

BY

JAMES HUNEKER

"I would write on the lintels
of the door-post, 'Whim'"
—*Emerson*

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1921

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THIS BOOK

OF SPLEEN AND GOSSIP IS INSCRIBED

TO MY FRIEND

EDWARD ZIEGLER

"Come! let us lay a crazy lance in rest
And tilt at windmills under a wild sky."

—*John Galsworthy.*

"He is a fribble, a sonsy faddle, whose conceits veer with the breese like a creaking weather-vane. As the sterile moon hath her librations, so must he boast of his oscillations, thinking them eternal verities. A very cockatoo in his perched-up vanity and prodigious clatter. . . ."

[*From "The Velvet Cactus." Anonymous. Printed at the Sign of the Cat and Cameo, Threadneedle Street, London. A.D. 1723. Rare.*]

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UNICORNS

UNICORNS

CHAPTER I

IN PRAISE OF UNICORNS

"The Lion and the Unicorn were fighting for the crown:
The Lion beat the Unicorn all round the town." . . .

IN the golden book of wit and wisdom, Through the Looking-Glass, the Unicorn rather disdainfully remarks that he had believed children to be fabulous monsters. Alice smilingly retorts: "Do you know, I always thought Unicorns were fabulous monsters, too? I never saw one alive before!" "Well, now that we *have* seen each other," said the Unicorn, "if you'll believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is that a bargain?" "Yes, if you like," said Alice. No such ambiguous bargains are needed to demonstrate the existence of Unicorns. That is, not for imaginative people. A mythical monster, a heraldic animal, he figures in the dictionary as the Monoceros, habitat, India; and he is the biblical Urus, sporting one horn, a goat beard and a lion's tail. He may be all these things for practical persons; no man is a genius to his wife. But maugre that he is something more for dreamers of dreams; though

not the Hippogriff, with its liberating wings, volplaning through the Fourth Dimension of Space; nor yet is he tender Undine, spirit of fountains, of whom the Unicorn asked: "By the waters of what valley has jealous mankind hidden the source of your secrets?" (Cousin german to the Centaur of Maurice de Guérin, he can speak in like cadence.)

Alice with her "dreaming eyes of wonder" was, after the manner of little girls, somewhat pragmatic. She believed in Unicorns only when she saw one. Yet we must believe without such proof. Has not the Book of Job put this question: "Canst thou bind the Unicorn with his band in the furrow?" As if a harnessed Unicorn would be credible. We prefer placing the charming monster, with the prancing tiny hoofs of ivory (surely Chopin set him to musical notation in his capricious second Étude in F; Chopin who, if man were soulless, would have endowed him with one) in the same category as the Chimera of "The Temptation of St. Antony," which thus taunted the Sphinx: "I am light and joyous! I offer to the eyes of men dazzling perspectives with Paradise in the clouds above. . . . I seek for new perfumes, for vaster flowers, for pleasures never felt before. . . ."

With Unicorns we feel the nostalgia of the infinite, the sorcery of dolls, the salt of sex, the vertigo of them that skirt the edge of perilous ravines, or straddle the rim of finer issues. He

dwells in equivocal twilights; and he can stare the sun out of countenance. The enchanting Unicorn boasts no favoured zone. He runs around the globe. He is of all ages and climes. He knows that fantastic land of Gautier, which contains all the divine lost landscapes ever painted, and whose inhabitants are the lovely figures created by art in granite, marble, or wood, on walls, canvas, or crystal. Betimes he flashes by the nymph in the brake, and dazzled, she sighs with desire. Mallarmé set him to cryptic harmonies, and placed him in a dim rich forest (though he called him a faun; a faun in retorsion). Like the apocryphal Sadhuzag in Flaubert's cosmical drama of dreams, which bore seventy-four hollow antlers from which issued music of ineffable sweetness, our Unicorn sings ravishing melodies for those who possess the inner ear of mystics and poets. When angered he echoes the Seven Thunders of the Apocalypse, and we hear of desperate rumours of fire, flood, and disaster. And he haunts those ivory gates of sleep whence come ineffable dreams to mortals.

He has always fought with the Lion for the crown, and he is always defeated, but invariably claims the victory. The crown is Art, and the Lion, being a realist born, is only attracted by its glitter, not the symbol. The Unicorn, an idealist, divines the inner meaning of this precious fillet of gold. Art is the modern philosopher's stone, and the most brilliant jewel

in this much-contested crown. Eternal is the conflict of the Real and the Ideal; Aristotle and Plato; Alice and the Unicorn; the practical and the poetic; butterflies and geese; and rare roast-beef versus the impossible blue rose. And neither the Lion nor the Unicorn has yet fought the battle decisive. Perhaps the day may come when, weariness invading their very bones, they may realise that they are as different sides of the same coveted shield; matter and spirit, the multitude and the individual. Then unlock the ivory tower, abolish the tyrannies of superannuated superstitions, and give the people vision, without which they perish. The divine rights of humanity, no longer of kingly cabbages.

The dusk of the future is washed with the silver of hope. The Lion and the Unicorn in single yoke. Strength and Beauty should represent the fusion of the Ideal and the Real. There should be no anarchy, no socialism, no Brotherhood or Sisterhood of mankind, just the millennium of sense and sentiment. What title shall we give that far-away time, that longed-for Utopia? With Alice and the Faun we forget names, so let us follow her method when in doubt, and exclaim: "Here then! Here then!" Morose and disillusioned souls may cry aloud: "Ah! to see behind us no longer, on the Lake of Eternity, the implacable Wake of Time!" nevertheless, we must believe in the reality of our Unicorn. He is Pan. He is

IN PRAISE OF UNICORNS

Puck. He is Shelley. He is Ariel. He is Whim. He is Irony. And he can boast with Emerson:

> "I am owner of the sphere,
> Of the seven stars and the solar year,
> Of Cæsar's hand and Plato's brain,
> Of Lord Christ's heart and Shakespeare's strain."

CHAPTER II

AN AMERICAN COMPOSER

THE PASSING OF EDWARD MACDOWELL

WHOM the gods love ——!

Admirers of Edward MacDowell's Sonata Tragica may recall the last movement, in which, after a triumphant climax, the curtain falls on tragic misery. It was the very Greek-like belief of MacDowell that nothing is more sublimely awful than "to heighten the darkness of tragedy by making it follow closely on the heels of triumph." This he accomplished in his first sonata, and fate has ironically transposed to the life of its composer the cruel and tragic drama of his own music. Despite occasional days brightened by a flitting hope, the passing of Edward MacDowell has begun. He is no longer an earth-dweller. His body is here, but his brain elsewhere. Not mad, not melancholy, not sunken in the stupor of indifference, his mind is translated to a region where serenity,

[The above appeared in the New York *Herald*, June 24, 1906, and is reprinted by request. Edward MacDowell died January 23, 1908.]

even happiness, dwells. It is doubtless the temporary arrest of the dread mental malady before it plunges its victims into darkness. Luckily, with the advent of that last phase, the body will also succumb, and the most poetic composer of music in America be for us but a fragrant memory.

Irony is a much-abused word, yet does it not seem the very summit of pitiless irony for a man of MacDowell's musical and intellectual equipment and physical health to be stricken down at the moment when, after the hard study of twenty-five years, he has, as the expression goes, found himself? And the gods were good to him — too good.

At his cradle poetry and music presided. He was a born tone-poet. He had also the painter's eye and the interior vision of the seer. A mystic and a realist. The practical side of his nature was shown by his easy grasp of the technics of pianoforte-playing. He had a large, muscular hand, with a formidable grip on the keyboard. Much has been said of the idealist MacDowell, but this young man, who had in his veins Scotch, Irish, and English blood, loved athletic sports; loved, like Hazlitt, a fast and furious boxing-match. The call of his soul won him for music and poetry. Otherwise he could have been a sea-captain, a soldier, or an explorer in far-away countries. He had the physique; he had the big, manly spirit. We are grateful, selfishly grateful, con-

sidering his life's tragedy, that he became a composer.

Here, again, in all this abounding vitality, the irony of the skies is manifest. Never a dissipated man, without a touch of the improvidence we ascribe to genius, a practical moralist — rare in any social condition — moderate in his tastes, though not a Puritan, he nevertheless has been mowed down by the ruthless reaper of souls as if his were negligible clay. But he was reckless of the most precious part of him, his brain. He killed that organ by overwork. Not for gain — the money-getting ideal and this man were widely asunder — but for the love of teaching, for the love of sharing with others the treasures in his overflowing storehouse, and primarily for the love of music. He, American as he was — it is sad to speak of him in the past tense — and in these piping days of the pursuit of the gold piece, held steadfast to his art. He attempted to do what others have failed in, he attempted to lead, here in our huge, noisy city, antipathetic to æsthetic creation, the double existence of a composer and a pedagogue. He burned away the delicate neurons of the cortical cells, and to-day he cannot say "pianoforte" without a trial. He suffers from aphasia, and locomotor ataxia has begun to manifest itself. It would be tragedy in the household of any man; it is doubly so in the case of Edward MacDowell.

He has just passed forty-five years and there

are to his credit some sixty works, about one hundred and thirty-two compositions in all. These include essays in every form, except music-drama — symphonic and lyric, concertos and sonatas for piano, little piano pieces of delicate workmanship, charged with poetic meanings, suites for orchestra and a romance for violoncello, with orchestral accompaniment. As a boy of fifteen MacDowell went to the Paris Conservatoire, there entering the piano classes of Marmontel. It was in 1876. Two years later I saw him at the same institution and later in comparing notes we discovered that we had both attended a concert at the Trocadero, wherein Nicholas Rubinstein, the brilliant brother of Anton, played the B flat minor concerto of a youthful and unknown composer, Peter Illyitch Tschaikovsky by name. This same concerto had been introduced to America in 1876 by Hans von Bülow, to whom it is dedicated. Rubinstein's playing took hold of young MacDowell's imagination. He saw there was no chance of mastering such a torrential style in Paris, or, for that matter, in Germany. He had enjoyed lessons from Teresa Carreño, but the beautiful Venezuelan was not then the virtuosa of to-day.

So MacDowell, who was accompanied by his mother, a sage woman and deeply in sympathy with her son's aims, went to Frankfort, where he had the benefit of Karl Heymann's tuition. He was the only pianist I ever heard

who could be compared to our Rafael Joseffy. But his influences, while marked in the development of his American pupil, did not weaken MacDowell's individuality. Studies in composition under Joachim Raff followed, and then he journeyed to Weimar for his baptism of fire at the hands of Lizst. That genial Prospero had broken his wand of virtuoso and devoted himself to the culture of youthful genius and his own compositions. He was pleased by the force, the surety, the brilliancy and the poetic qualities of MacDowell's playing, and he laughingly warned Eugen d'Albert to look to his laurels. But music was in the very bones of MacDowell, and a purely virtuoso career had no attraction for him. He married in 1884 Marian Nevins, of New York, herself a pianist and a devoted propagandist of his music. The pair settled in Wiesbaden, and it was the happiest period of MacDowell's career. He taught; he played as "guest" in various German cities; above all, he composed. His entire evolution is surveyed in Mr. Lawrence Gilman's sympathetic monograph. It was in Wiesbaden that he laid the foundation of his solid technique as a composer.

I once asked him during one of our meetings how he had summoned the courage to leave such congenial surroundings. In that half-smiling, half-shy way of his, so full of charm and naïveté, he told me his house had burned down and he had resolved to return home and

make enough money to build another. He came to America in 1888 and found himself, if not famous, at least well known. To Frank van der Stucken belongs the glory of having launched the young composer, and so long ago as 1886 in the old Chickering Hall. Some would like to point to the fact that America was MacDowell's artistic undoing, but the truth is against them. As a matter of musical history he accomplished his best work in the United States, principally on his farm at Peterboro, N. H. — hardly, one would imagine, artistic soil for such a dreamer in tones. But life has a way of contradicting our theories. Teaching, I have learned, was not pursued to excess by MacDowell, who had settled in Boston. Yet I wish there were sumptuary legislation for such cases. Why should an artist like MacDowell have been forced into the shafts of dull routine? It is the larger selfishness, all this, but I cling to it. MacDowell belonged to the public. Joseffy belongs to the public. They doubtless did and do much good as teachers, but the public is the loser. Besides, if MacDowell, who was a virtuoso had confined himself to recitals he might not ——

Alas! all this is bootless imagining. He launched himself with his usual unselfishness into the advancement of his scholars, and when in 1896 he was called to the chair of music at Columbia the remaining seven years of his incumbency he gave up absolutely to his classes.

A sabbatical year intervened. He went to Switzerland for a rest. Then he made a tour of the West, a triumphal tour; and later followed the regrettable difference with Columbia. He resigned in 1904, and I doubt if he had had a happy day since — that is, until the wave of forgetfulness came over him and blotted out all recollections.

As a pianist I may only quote what Rafael Joseffy once said to me after a performance of the MacDowell D minor concerto by its composer: "What's the use of a poor pianist trying to compete with a fellow who writes his own music and then plays it the way MacDowell does?" It was said jestingly, but, as usual, when Joseffy opens his mouth there is a grain of wisdom in the speech. MacDowell's French training showed in his "pianism" in the velocity, clarity, and pearly quality of his scales and trills. He had the elegance of the salon player; he knew the traditions. But he was modern, German and Slavic in his combined musical interpretation and fiery attack. His tone was large; at times it was brutal. This pianist did not shine in a small hall. He needed space, as do his later compositions. There was something both noble and elemental in the performance of his own sonatas. At his instrument his air of preoccupation, his fine poetic head, the lines of which were admirably salient on the concert stage, and his passion in execution were notable details in the har-

monious picture. Like Liszt, MacDowell and his Steinway were as the rider and his steed. They seemed inseparable. Under the batons of Nikisch, Gericke, Paur, and Seidl we heard him, and for once at least the critics were unanimous.

When I first studied the MacDowell music I called the composer "a belated Romantic." A Romantic he is by temperament, while his training under Raff further accentuated that tendency. It is a dangerous matter to make predictions of a contemporary composer, yet a danger critically courted in these times of rapid-fire judgments. I have been a sinner myself, and am still unregenerate, for if it be sinful to judge hastily in the affirmative, by the same token it is quite as grave an error to judge hastily in the negative. So I shall dare the possible contempt of the succeeding critical generation, which I expect — and hope — will not calmly reverse our dearest predictions, and range myself on the side of MacDowell. And with this reservation; I called him the most poetic composer of America. He would be a poetic composer in any land; yet it seems to me that his greatest, because his most individual, work is to be found in his four piano sonatas. I am always subdued by the charm of his songs; but he did not find his fullest expression in his lyrics.

The words seemed to hamper the bold wing strokes of his inspiration. He did not go far

enough in his orchestral work to warrant our saying: "Here is something new!" He shows the influence of Wagner slightly, of Grieg, of Raff, of Liszt, in his first Orchestral Suite, his Hamlet and Ophelia, Launcelot and Elaine; The Saracens and Lovely Alda, the Indian Suite, and in the two concertos. The form is still struggling to emerge from the bonds of the Romantics — of classic influence there is little trace. But the general effect is fragmentary. It is not the real MacDowell, notwithstanding the mastery of technical material, the genuine feeling for orchestral colour, which is natural, not studied. There are poetic moods — MacDowell is always a poet — yet no pathbreaker. Indeed, he seemed as if hesitating. I remember how we discussed Brahms, Tschaikovsky, and Richard Strauss. The former he admired as a master builder; the latter piqued his curiosity tremendously, particularly Also Sprach Zarathustra. I think that Tschaikovsky made the deepest appeal, though he said that the Russian's music sounded better than it was. Grieg he admired, but Grieg could never have drawn the long musical line we find in the MacDowell sonatas.

The fate of intermediate types is inevitable. Music is an art of specialisation: the Wagner music-drama, Chopin piano music, Schubert songs, Beethoven symphony, Liszt symphonic poems, and Richard Strauss tone-poems, all these are unique. MacDowell has invented

many lovely melodies. That the Indian duet for orchestra, the Woodland Sketches, New England Idyls, the Sea Pieces — To the Sea is a wonderful transcription of the mystery, and the salt and savour of the ocean — will have a long life, but not as long as the piano sonatas. By them he will stand or fall. MacDowell never goes chromatically mad on his harmonic tripod, nor does he tear passion to tatters in his search of the dramatic. If he recalls any English poet it is Keats, and like Keats he is simple and sensuous in his imagery, and a lover of true romance; not the sham ecstasies of mock mediæval romance, but that deep and tender sentiment which we encounter in the poetry of Keats — in the magic of a moon half veiled by flying clouds; in the mystery and scent of old and tangled gardens. I should call MacDowell a landscape-painter had I not heard his sonata music. Those sonatas, the Tragica, Eroica, Norse, and Keltic, with their broad, coloured narrative, ballad-like tone, their heroic and chivalric accents, epic passion, and feminine tenderness. The psychology is simple if you set this music against that of Strauss, of Loeffler, or of Debussy.

But it is noble, noble as the soul of the man who conceived it. Elastic in form, orchestral in idea, these sonatas — which are looser spun in the web than Liszt's — will keep alive the name of MacDowell. This statement must not be considered as evidence that I fail to

[illegible] much of it, [illegible] but the [illegible] imagination. When [illegible] I did not [illegible] Now I like [illegible] magic and its [illegible] Dreamilin." [illegible] combined [illegible] reminiscence in realm.

I believe [illegible] sorely stricken was [illegible] He spoke vaguely [illegible] symphonic works, [illegible]-poem form of Liszt. He would have always remained the poet, and perhaps [illegible] scenes, but, like Schumann, [illegible] Smetana and Hugo Wolf, his [illegible] the strain of intense study. The composition of music involves and taxes [illegible] higher [illegible] centres.

The privilege was [illegible] me of visiting the sick man at his home several weeks ago, and I am glad I saw him, for his appearance dissipated the painful impression I had conjured up. Our interview, brief as it was, became the reverse of morbid or unpleasant before it terminated. With his mental disintegration sunny youth has returned to the composer. In snowy white, he looks not more than twenty-five years old, until you note the grey in his thick, rebellious locks. There is still gold in his moustache and his eyes are luminously

blue. His expression suggests a spirit purged of all grossness waiting for the summons. He smiles, but not as a madman; he talks hesitatingly, but never babbles. There is continuity in his ideas for minutes. Sometimes the word fits the idea; oftener he uses one foreign to his meaning. His wife, of whose devotion, almost poignant in its earnestness, it would be too sad to dwell upon, is his faithful interpreter. He moves with difficulty. He plays dominoes, but seldom goes to the keyboard. He reads slowly and, like the unfortunate Friedrich Nietzsche, he rereads one page many times. I could not help recalling what Mrs. Elizabeth Foerster-Nietzsche told me in Weimar of her brother. One day, noticing that she silently wept, the poet-philosopher exclaimed:

"But why do you weep, little sister? Are we not very happy?"

MacDowell is very happy and his wife is braver than Nietzsche's sister. One fragment of his conversation I recall. With glowing countenance he spoke of the thunderbolt in his wonderfully realistic piano poem, The Eagle. There had been a lightning-storm during the afternoon. Then he told me how he had found water by means of the hazel wand on his New Hampshire farm — a real happening. As I went away I could not help remembering that the final words I should ever hear uttered by this friend were of bright fire and running water and dream-music.

CHAPTER III

REMY DE GOURMONT

HIS IDEAS. THE COLOUR OF HIS MIND

"Je dis ce que je pense"—R. DE G.

I

THOSE were days marked by a white stone when arrived in the familiar yellow cover a new book, with card enclosed from "Remy de Gourmont, 71, rue des Saints-Pères, Paris." Sometimes I received as many as two in a year. But they always found me eager and grateful, did those precious little volumes bearing the imprint of the *Mercure de France*, with whose history the name of De Gourmont is so happily linked. And there were post-cards too in his delicate handwriting on which were traced sense and sentiment; yes, this man of genius possessed sentiment, but abhorred sentimentality. His personal charm transpired in a friendly salutation hastily pencilled. He played exquisitely upon his intellectual instrument, and knew the value of time and space. So his post-cards are souvenirs of his courtesy, and it was through one, which unexpectedly

fell from the sky in 1897, I began my friendship with this distinguished French critic. His sudden death in 1915 at Paris (he was born 1858), caused by apoplexy, was the heroic ending of a man of letters. Like Flaubert he was stricken while at his desk. I can conceive no more fitting end for a valiant soldier of literature. He was a moral hero and the victim of his prolonged technical heroism.

De Gourmont was incomparable. Thought, not action, was his chosen sphere, but ranging up and down the vague and vast territory of ideas he encountered countless cerebral adventures; the most dangerous of all. An aristocrat born, he was, nevertheless, a convinced democrat. The latch was always lifted on the front door of his ivory tower. He did live in a certain sense a cloistered existence, a Benedictine of arts and letters; but he was not, as has been said, a sour hermit nursing morose fancies in solitude. De Gourmont, true pagan, enjoyed the gifts the gods provide, and had, despite the dualism of his nature, an epicurean soul. But of a complexity. He never sympathised with the disproportionate fuss raised by the metaphysicians about Instinct and Intelligence, yet his own magnificent cerebral apparatus was a battle-field over which swept the opposing hosts of Instinct and Intelligence, and in a half-hundred volumes the history of this conflict is faithfully set down. As personal as Maurice Barrès, without his egoism, as subtle

as Anatole France, De Gourmont saw life steadier and broader than either of these two contemporaries. He was one who said "vast things simply." He was the profoundest philosopher of the three, and never, after his beginnings, exhibited a trace of the dilettante. Life soon became something more than a mere spectacle for him. He was a meliorist in theory and practice, though he asserted that Christianity, an Oriental-born religion, has not become spiritually acclimated among Occidental peoples. But he missed its consoling function; religion, the poetry of the poor, never had for him the prime significance that it had for William James; a legend, vague, vast, and delicious.

Old frontiers have disappeared in science and art and literature. We have Maeterlinck, a poet writing of bees, Poincaré, a mathematician opening our eyes to the mystic gulfs of space; solid matters resolved into mist, and the law of gravitation questioned. The new horizons beckon ardent youth bent on conquering the secrets of life. And there are more false beacon-lights than true. But if this is an age of specialists a man occasionally emerges who contradicts the formula. De Gourmont was at base a poet; also a dramatist, novelist, raconteur, man of science, critic, moralist of erudition, and, lastly, a philosopher. Both formidable and bewildering were his accomplishments. He is a poet in his Hieroglyphes, Oraisons mauvaises, Le Livre des Litanies, Les Saintes du Paradis,

Simone, Divertissements — his last appearance in singing robes (1914); he is a raconteur — and such tales — in Histoires magiques, Prose moroses, Le Pèlerin du silence, D'un Pays lointain, Couleurs; a novelist in Merlette — his first book — Sixtine, Le Fantôme, les Chevaux de Diomède, Le Songe d'une Femme, Une Nuit au Luxembourg, Un Cœur virginal; dramatist in Théodat, Phénissa, Le vieux Roi, Lilith; as master critic of the æsthetics of the French language his supremacy is indisputable; it is hardly necessary to refer here to Le Livre des Masques, in two volumes, the five volumes of Promenades littéraires, the three of Promenades philosophiques; as moralist he has signed such works as l'Idealisme, La Culture des Idées, Le Chemin de Velours; historian and humanist, he has given us Le Latin mystique; grammarian and philologist, he displays his learning in Le Problème du Style, and Esthétique de la Langue française, and incidentally flays an unhappy pedagogue who proposed to impart the secret of style in twenty lessons. He edited many classics of French literature.

His chief contribution to science, apart from his botanical and entomological researches, is Physique de l'Amour, in which he reveals himself as a patient, thorough observer in an almost new country. And what shall we say to his incursions into the actual, into the field of politics, sociology and hourly happenings of Paris life; his Epilogues (three volumes),

Dialogues des Amateurs, the collected pages from his monthly contributions to *Mercure de France?* Nothing human was alien to him, nor inhuman, for he rejected as quite meaningless the latter vocable, as he rejected such clichés as "organic and inorganic." Years before we heard of a pluralistic universe De Gourmont was a pragmatist, though an idealist in his conception of the world as a personal picture. Intensely interested in ideas, as he was in words, he might have fulfilled Lord Acton's wish that some one would write a History of Ideas. At the time of his death the French thinker was composing a work entitled La Physique des Mœurs, in which he contemplated a demonstration of his law of intellectual constancy.

A spiritual cosmopolitan, he was like most Frenchmen an ardent patriot. The little squabble in the early eighties over a skit of his, Le Jou-jou — patriotisme (1883), cost him his post at the National Library in Paris. As a philosopher he deprecated war; as a man, though too old to fight, he urged his countrymen to victory, as may be noted in his last book, Pendant l'Orage (1916). But the philosopher persists in such a sorrowful sentence as: "In the tragedy of man peace is but an entr'acte." To show his mental balance at a time when literary men, artists, and even philosophers, indulged in unseemly abuse, we read in Jugements his calm admission that the war has not destroyed for him the intellectual values

of Goethe, Schopenhauer, or Nietzsche. He owes much to their thought as they owed much to French thought; Goethe has said as much; and of Voltaire and Chamfort, Schopenhauer was a disciple. Without being a practical musician, De Gourmont was a lover of Beethoven and Wagner. He paid his compliments to Romain Rolland, whose style, both chalky and mucilaginous, he dislikes in that overrated and spun-out series Jean-Christophe. Another little volume, La Belgique littéraire, was published in 1915, which, while it contains nothing particularly new about Georges Rodenbach, Emile Verhaeren, Van Lerberghe, Camille Lemonnier, and Maurice Maeterlinck, is excellent reading. The French critic was also editor of the *Revue des Idées*, and judging from the bibliography compiled by Pierre de Querlon as long ago as 1903, he was a collaborator of numerous magazines. He wrote on Emerson, English humour, or Thomas à Kempis with the same facility as he dissected the mystic Latin writers of the early centuries after Christ. Indeed, such versatility was viewed askance by the plodding crowd of college professors, his general adversaries. But his erudition could not be challenged; only two other men matched his scholarship, Anatole France and the late Marcel Schwob. And we have only skimmed the surface of his accomplishments. Remy de Gourmont is the Admirable Crichton of French letters.

II

Prodigious incoherence might be reasonably expected from this diversity of interests, yet the result is quite the reverse. The artist in this complicated man banished confusion. He has told us that because of the diversity of his aptitudes man is distinguished from his fellow animals, and the variety in his labours is a proof positive of his superiority to such fellow critics as the mentally constipated Brunetière, the impressionistic Anatole France, the agile and graceful Lemaître, and the pedantic philistine Faguet. But if De Gourmont always attains clarity with no loss of depth, he sometimes mixes his genres; that is, the poet peeps out in his reports of the psychic life of insects, as the philosopher lords it over the pages of his fiction. A mystic betimes, he is a crystal-clear thinker. And consider the catholicity evinced in Le Livre des Masques. He wrote of such widely diverging talents as Maeterlinck, Mallarmé, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, and Paul Adam; of Henri de Regnier and Jules Renard; of Huysmans and Jules Laforgue; the mysticism of Francis Poictevin's style and the imagery of Saint-Pol-Roux he defined, and he displays an understanding of the first symbolist poet, Arthur Rimbaud, while disliking the personality of that abnormal youth. But why recite this litany of new talent literally made visible and vocal by

our critic? It is a pleasure to record the fact that most of his swans remained swans and did not degenerate into tame geese. In this book he shows himself a profound psychologist.

Insatiably curious, he yet contrived to drive his chimeras in double harness and safely. His best fiction is Sixtine and Une Nuit au Luxembourg, if fiction they may be called. Never will their author be registered among best-sellers. Sixtine deals with the adventures of a masculine brain. Ideas are the hero. In Un Cœur virginal we touch earth, fleshly and spiritually. This story shocked its readers. It may be considered as a sequel to Physique de l'Amour. It shows mankind as a gigantic insect indulging in the same apparently blind pursuit of sex sensation as a beetle, and also shows us the "female of our species" endowed with less capacity for modesty than the lady mole, the most chaste of all animals. Disconcerting, too, is the psychology of the heroine's virginal soul, not, however, cynical; cynicism is the irony of vice, and De Gourmont is never cynical. But a master of irony.

Une Nuit au Luxembourg has been done into English. It handles with delicacy and frankness themes that in the hands of a lesser artist would be banished as brutal and blasphemous. The author knows that all our felicity is founded on a compromise between the dream and reality, and for that reason while he signals the illusion he never mocks it; he is too much an

idealist. In the elaborately carved cups of his tales, foaming over with exquisite perfumes and nectar, there lurks the bitter drop of truth. He could never have said with Proudhon that woman is the desolation of the just; for him woman is often an obsession. Yet, captain of his instincts, he sees her justly; he is not subdued by sex. With a gesture he destroys the sentimental scaffolding of the sensualist and marches on to new intellectual conquests.

In Lilith, an Adamitic Morality, he reveals his Talmudic lore. The first wife of our common ancestor is a beautiful hell-hag, the accomplice of Satan in the corruption of the human race. Thus mediæval play is epical in its Rabelaisian plainness of speech. Perhaps the Manichean in De Gourmont fabricated its revolting images. He had traversed the Baudelairian steppes of blasphemy and black pessimism; Baudelaire, a poet who was a great critic. Odi profanum vulgus! was De Gourmont's motto, but his soul was responsive to so many contacts that he emerged, as Barrès emerged, a citizen of the world. Anarchy as a working philosophy did not long content him, although he never relinquished his detached attitude of proud individualism. He saw through the sentimental equality of J.-J. Rousseau. Rousseau it was who said that thinking man was a depraved animal. Perhaps he was not far from the truth. Man is an affective animal more interested in the immediate testimony of his senses than in

his intellectual processes. His metaphysic may be but the reverberation of his sensations on the shore of his subliminal self, the echo of the sounding shell he calls his soul. And our critic had his scientific studies to console him for the inevitable sterility of soul that follows egoism and a barren debauch of the sensations. He did not tarry long in the valley of excess. His artistic sensibility was his saviour.

Without being a dogmatist, De Gourmont was an antagonist of absolutism. A determinist, (which may be dogmatism à rebours), a relativist, he holds that mankind is not a specially favoured species of the animal scale; thought is only an accident, possibly the result of rich nutrition. An automaton, man has no free will, but it is better for him to imagine that he has; it is a sounder working hypothesis for the average human. The universe had no beginning, it will have no end. There is no first link or last in the chain of causality. Everything must submit to the law of causality; to explain a blade of grass we must dismount the stars. Nevertheless, De Gourmont no more than Renan, had the mania of certitude. Humbly he interrogates the sphinx. There are no isolated phenomena in time or space. The mass of matter is eternal. Man is an animal submitting to the same laws that govern crystals or brutes. He is the expression of matter in physique and chemistry. Repetition is the law of life. Thought is a physiological product;

intelligence the secretion of matter and is amenable to the law of causality. (This sounds like Taine's famous definition of virtue and vice.) And who shall deny it all in the psychochemical laboratories? It is not the rigid old-fashioned materialism, but a return to the more plastic theories of Lamarck and the transformism of the Dutch botanist, Hugo de Vries. For De Gourmont the Darwinian notion that man is at the topmost notch of creation is as antique and absurd as most cosmogonies; indeed, it is the Asiatic egocentric idea of creation. Jacob's ladder repainted in Darwinian symbols. Voilà l'ennemi! said De Gourmont and put on his controversial armour. What blows, what sudden deadly attacks were his!

Quinton has demonstrated to the satisfaction of many scientists that bird life came later on our globe than the primates from whom we stem. The law of thermal constancy proves it by the interior temperature of birds. Man preceded the carnivorous and ruminating animals, of whom the bodily temperature is lower than that of birds. The ants and bees and beavers are not a whit more automatic than mankind. Automatism, says Ribot, is the rule. Thought is not free, wrote William James, when to it an affirmation is added; then it is but the affirmation of a preference. "L'homme," asserts De Gourmont, "varie à l'infini sa mimique. Sa supériorité, c'est la diversité immense de ses aptitudes." He welcomed Jules de Gaultier

and his theory of Bovaryisme; of the vital lie, because of which we pretend to be what we are not. That way spells security, if not progress. The idea of progress is another necessary illusion, for it provokes a multiplicity of activities. Our so-called free will is naught but the faculty of making a decision determined by a great and varied number of motives. As for morality, it is the outcome of tribal taboos; the insect and animal world shows deepest-dyed immorality, revolting cruelty, and sex perversity. Rabbits and earthworms through no fault of their own suffer from horrible maladies. From all of which our critic deduces his law of intellectual constancy. The human brain since prehistoric times has been neither diminished nor augmented; it has remained like a sponge, which can be dry or saturated, but still remains itself. It is a constant. In a favourable environment it is enriched. The greatest moment in the history of the human family was the discovery of fire by an anthropoid of genius. Prometheus then should be our god. Without him we should have remained more or less simian, and probably of arboreal habits.

III

A synthetic brain is De Gourmont's, a sower of doubts, though not a No-Sayer to the universe. He delights in challenging accepted "truths." Of all modern thinkers a master of

Vues d'ensembles, he smiles at the pretensions, usually a mask for poverty of ideas, of so-called "general ideas." He dissociates such conventional grouping of ideas as Glory, Justice, Decadence. The shining ribs of disillusion shine through his psychology; a psychology of nuance and finesse. Disillusioning reflections, these. Not to be put in any philosophical pigeonhole, he is as far removed from the eclecticism of Victor Cousin as from the verbal jugglery and metaphysical murmurings of Henri Bergson. The world is his dream; but it is a tangible dream, charged with meaning, order, logic. The truest reality is thought. Action spoils. (Goethe said: "Thought expands, action narrows.") Our abstract ideas are metaphysical idols, says Jules de Gaultier. The image of the concrete is De Gourmont's touchstone. Théophile Gautier declared that he was a man for whom the visible world existed. He misjudged his capacity for apprehending reality. The human brain, excellent instrument in a priori combinations is inept at perceiving realities. The "Sultan of the Epithet," as De Goncourt nicknamed "le bon Théo," was not the "Emperor of Thought," according to Henry James, and for him it was a romantic fiction spun in the rich web of his fancy. A vaster, greyer world is adumbrated in the books of De Gourmont. He never allowed symbolism to deform his representation of sober, every-day life. He pictured the future domain of art and

ideas as a fair and shining landscape no longer a series of little gardens with high walls. A hater of formulas, sects, schools, he teaches that the capital crime of the artist, the writer, the thinker, is conformity. (Yet how serenely this critic swims in classic currents!) The artist's work should reflect his personality, a magnified reflection. He must create his own æsthetic. There are no schools, only individuals. And of consistency he might have said that it is oftener a mule than a jewel.

Sceptical in all matters, though never the fascinating sophist that is Anatole France, De Gourmont criticised the thirty-six dramatic situations, reducing the number to four. Man as centre in relation to himself; in relation to other men; in relation to the other sex; in relation to God, or Nature. His ecclesiastical *fond* may be recognised in Le Chemin de Velours with its sympathetic exposition of Jesuit doctrine, and the acuity of its judgments on Pascal and the Jansenists. The latter section is as an illuminating foot-note to the history of Port-Royal by Sainte-Beuve. The younger critic has the supple intellect of the supplest-minded Jesuit. His bias toward the order is unmistakable. There are few books I reread with more pleasure than this Path of Velvet. Certain passages in it are as silky and sonorous as the sound of Eugène Ysaye's violin.

The colour of De Gourmont's mind is stained by his artistic sensibility. A maker of images,

his vocabulary astounding as befits both a poet and philologist, one avid of beautiful words, has variety. The temper of his mind is tolerant, a quality that has informed the finer intellects of France since Montaigne. His literary equipment is unusual. A style as brilliant, sinuous, and personal as his thought; flexible or massive, continent or coloured, he discourses at ease in all the gamuts and modes major, minor, and mixed. A swift, weighty style, the style of a Latinist; a classic, not a romantic style. His formal sense is admirable. The tenderness of Anatole France is absent, except in his verse, which is less spontaneous than volitional. A pioneer in new æsthetic pastures, De Gourmont is a poet for poets. He has virtuosity, though the gift of tears nature — possibly jealous because of her prodigality — has denied him. But in the curves of his overarching intellect there may be found wit, gaiety, humour, the Gallic attributes, allied with poetic fancy, profundity of thought, and a many-sided comprehension of life, art, and letters. He is in the best tradition of French criticism only more versatile than either Sainte-Beuve or Taine; as versatile as Doctor Brandes or Arthur Symons, and that is saying much. With Anatole France he could have exclaimed: "The longer I contemplate human life, the more I believe that we must give it, for witnesses and judges, Irony and Pity. . . ."

CHAPTER IV

ARTZIBASHEF

I

ONCE upon a time Maurice Maeterlinck wrote: "Whereas, it is far away from bloodshed, battle-cry, and sword-thrust that the lives of most of us flow on, and the tears of men are silent to-day, and invisible, and almost spiritual. . . ." This is a plea for his own spiritualised art, in which sensations are attenuated, and emotions within emotions, the shadow of the primal emotions, are spun into crepuscular shapes. But literature refused to follow the example of the Belgian dreamer, and since the advent of the new century there has been a recrudescence of violence, a melodramatic violence. that must be disconcerting to Maeterlinck.

It is particularly the case with Russian poetry, drama, and fiction. That vast land of promise and disillusionment is become a trying-out place for the theories and speculations of western Europe; no other nation responds so sensitively to the vibrations of the Time-Spirit, no other literature reflects with such clearness the fluctuations of contemporary

thought and sensibility. The Slav is the most emotional among living peoples.

Not that mysticism is missing; indeed, it is the key-note of much Russian literature; but it was the clash of events, the march of ideas which precipitated young Russia into the expression of revolt, pessimism, and its usual concomitant, materialism. There were bloodshed, battle-cries, and sword-thrusts, and tears, tangible, not invisible, in the uprising of ten years ago. The four great masters, Gogol, Dostoievsky, Turgenev, and Tolstoy, still ruled the minds of the intellectuals, but a younger element was the yeast in the new fermentation.

Tchekov, with his epical ennui, with his tales of mean, colourless lives, Gorky and his disinherited barefoot brigade, the dramatic Andreiev, the mystic Sologub, and Kuprin, Zensky, Kusmin, Ivanov, Ropshin, Zaitzeff, Chapygin, Serafimovitch (I select a few of the romancers) — not to mention such poets as Block, Reminsov, and Ivanov — are the men who are fighting under various banners but always for complete freedom.

Little more than a decade has passed since the appearance of a young man named Michael Artzibashef who, without any preliminary blaring of trumpets, has taken the centre of the stage and still holds it. He is as Slavic as Dostoievsky, more pessimistic than Tolstoy, though not the supreme artist that was Turgenev.

Of Gogol's overwhelming humour he has not a trace; instead, a corroding irony which eats into the very vitals of faith in all things human. Gorky, despite his "bitter" nickname, is an incorrigible optimist compared with Artzibashef. One sports with Nietzsche, the other not only swears by Max Stirner, but some of his characters are Stirnerism incarnate. His chosen field in society is the portrayal of the middle-class and proletarian.

To André Villard, his friend and one of his translators, the new Russian novelist told something of his life, a life colourless, dreary, bare of dramatic events. Born in a small town in southern Russia (1878), Michael Artzibashef is of Tatar, French, Georgian, and Polish blood. His great-grandfather on the maternal side was the Polish patriot Kosciusko. His father, a retired officer, was a small landowner. In the lad there developed the seeds of tuberculosis. His youth was a wretched one. At school he was unhappy because of its horrors — he has written of them in his first story, Pasha Tumanow — and he drifted from one thing to another till he wrote for a literary weekly in the provinces founded by a certain Miroliuboff, to whom he ascribes his first lift in life. Fellow contributors at the time were Maxim Gorky, Leonid Andreiev, Kuprin, and other young men who, like Artzibashef, have since "arrived."

His first successful tale was Ivan Lande. It brought him recognition. This was in 1904.

But the year before he had finished Sanine, his masterpiece, though it did not see publication till 1908. This was three years after the revolution of 1905, so that those critics were astray who spoke of the book as a naturally pessimistic reaction from the fruitless uprising. Pessimism was born in the bones of the author and he needed no external stimulus to provoke such a realistic study as Sanine. Whether he is happier, healthier, whether he has married and raised a family, we know not. Personal as his stories are said to be, their art renders them objective.

The world over Sanine has been translated. It is a significant book, and incorporates the aspirations of many young men and women in the Russian Empire. It was not printed at first because of the censorship, and in Germany it had to battle for its life.

It is not only written from the standpoint of a professed immoralist, but the Russian censor declared it pernicious because of its "defamation of youth," its suicidal doctrine, its depressing atmosphere. The sex element, too, has aroused indignant protests from the clergy, from the press, from society itself.

In reply to his critics Artzibashef has denied libelling the younger generation. "Sanine," he says, "is the apology for individualism: the hero of the novel is a type. In its pure form this type is still new and rare, but its spirit is in every frank, bold, and strong representative

of the new Russia." And then he adds his own protest against the imitators of Sanine, who "flooded the literary world with pornographic writings." Now, whatever else it may be, Sanine is not pornographic, though I shall not pretend to say that its influence has been harmless. We should not forget Werther and the trail of sentimental suicides that followed its publication. But Sanine is fashioned of sterner stuff than Goethe's romance, and if it be "dangerous," then all the better.

Test all things, and remember that living itself is a dangerous affair. Never has the world needed precepts of daring, courage, individualism more than in this age of cowardly self-seeking, and the sleek promises of altruism and its soulless well-being. Sanine is a call to arms for individualists. And recall the Russian saying: Self-conceit is the salt of life.

II

That Artzibashef denies the influence of Nietzsche while admitting his indebtedness to Nietzsche's forerunner, Max Stirner, need not particularly concern us. There are evidences scattered throughout the pages of Sanine that prove a close study of Nietzsche and his idealistic superman. Artist as is Artzibashef, he has densely spun into the fabric of his work the ideas that control his characters, and whether these ideas are called moral or immoral does

not matter. The chief thing is whether they are propulsive forces in the destiny of his puppets.

That he paints directly from life is evident: he tells us that in him is the débris of a painter compelled by poverty to relinquish his ambitions because he had not money enough to buy paper, pencil, colour. Such a realistic brush has seldom been wielded as the brush of Artzibashef. I may make one exception, that of J.-K. Huysmans. The Frenchman is the greater artist, the greater master of his material, and, as Havelock Ellis puts it, the master of "the intensest vision of the modern world"; but Huysmans lacks the all-embracing sympathy, the tremulous pity, the love of suffering mankind that distinguishes the young Russian novelist, a love that is blended with an appalling distrust, nay, hatred of life. Both men prefer the sordid, disagreeable, even the vilest aspects of life.

The general ideas of Artzibashef are few and profound. The leading motive of his symphony is as old as Ecclesiastes: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." It is not original, this theme, and it is as eternal as mediocrity; but it has been orchestrated anew by Artzibashef, who, like his fellow countrymen, Tschaikovsky and Moussorgsky, contrives to reveal to us, if no hidden angles of the truth, at least its illusion in terms of terror, anguish, and deadly nausea produced by mere existence.

With such poisoned roots Artzibashef's tree of life must soon be blasted. His intellectual indifferentism to all that constitutes the solace and bravery of our daily experience is almost pathological. The aura of sadism hovers about some of his men. After reading Artzibashef you wonder that the question, "Is life worth living?" will ever be answered in the affirmative among these humans, who, as old Homer says, hasten hellward from their birth.

The corollary to this leading motive is the absolute futility of action. A paralysis of the will overtakes his characters, the penalty of their torturing introspection. It was Turgenev, in an essay on Hamlet, who declared that the Russian character is composed of Hamlet-like traits. Man is the only animal that cannot live in the present; a Norwegian philosopher, Sören Kierkegaard, has said that he lives forward, thinks backward; he aspires to the future. An idealist, even when close to the gorilla, is doomed to disillusionment. He discounts to-morrow.

Russian youth has not always the courage of its chimera, though it fraternises with the phantasmagoria of its soul. Its Golden Street soon becomes choked with fog. The political and social conditions of the country must stifle individualism, else why should Artzibashef write with such savage intensity? His pen is the pendulum that has swung away from the sentimental brotherhood of man as exemplified

in Dostoievsky, and from the religious mania of Tolstoy to the opposite extreme, individual anarchy. Where there is repression there is rebellion. Max Stirner represents the individualism which found its vent in the Prussia of 1848; Nietzsche the reaction from the Prussia of 1870; Artzibashef forestalled the result of the 1905 insurrection in Russia.

His prophetic soul needed no proof; he knew that his people, the students and intellectuals, would be crushed. The desire of the clod for the cloud was extinguished. Happiness is an eternal hoax. Only children believe in life. The last call of the devil's dinner-bell has sounded. In the scenery of the sky there is only mirage. The moonlit air is a ruse of that wily old serpent, nature, to arouse romance in the breast of youth and urge a repetition of the life processes. We graze Schopenhauer, overhear Leopardi, but the Preacher has the mightiest voice. Naturally, the novelist says none of these things outright. The phrases are mine, but he points the moral in a way that is all his own.

What, then, is the remedy for the ills of this life? Is its misery immediable? Why must mankind go on living if the burden is so great? Even with wealth comes ennui or disease, and no matter how brilliant we may live, we must all die alone. Pascal said this better. In several of his death-bed scenes the dying men of Artzibashef curse their parents, mock at religion,

and — here is a novel nuance — abuse their intellectual leaders. Semenow the student, who appears in several of the stories, abuses Marx and Nietzsche. Of what use are these thinkers to a man about to depart from the world? It is the revolt of stark humanity from the illusions of brotherly love, from the chiefest illusion — self.

Artzibashef offers no magic draft of oblivion to his sufferers. With a vivid style that recalls the Tolstoy of The Death of Ivan Illitch he shows us old and young wrestling with the destroyer, their souls emptied of all earthly hopes save one. Shall I live? Not God's will be done, not the roseate dream of a future life, only — why must I die? though the poor devil is submerged in the very swamp of life. But life, life, even a horrible hell for eternity, rather than annihilation! In the portrayal of these damned creatures Artzibashef is elemental. He recalls both Dante and Dostoievsky.

He has told us that he owes much to Tolstoy (also to Goethe, Hugo, Dostoievsky, and much to Tchekov), but his characters are usually failures when following the tenets of Tolstoy, the great moralist and expounder of "non-resistance." He simply explodes the torpedo of truth under the ark of socialism. This may be noted in Ivan Lande — now in the English volume entitled The Millionaire — where we see step by step the decadence of a beautiful soul obsessed by the love of his fellows.

It is in the key of Tolstoy, but the moral is startling. Not thus can you save your soul. Max Stirner is to the fore. Don't turn your other cheek if one has been smitten, but smite the smiter, and heartily. However, naught avails, you must die, and die like a dog, a star, or a flower. Better universal suicide. Success comes only to the unfortunate. And so we swing back to Eduard von Hartmann, who, in his philosophy of the unconscious, counsels the same thing. (A ferocious advocate of pessimism and a disciple of Arthur Schopenhauer, by name Mainlander, preached world destruction through race suicide.)

But all these pessimists seem well fed and happy when compared to the nihilists of Artzibashef. He portrays every stage of disillusionment with a glacial calmness. Not even annihilation is worth the trouble of a despairing gesture. Cui bono? Revolutionist or royalist — your career is, if you but dare break the conspiracy of silence — a burden or a sorrow. Happiness is only a word. Love a brief sensation. Death a certainty. For such nihilism we must go to the jungles of Asia, where in a lifelong silence, some fanatic fatidically stares at his navel, the circular symbol of eternity.

III

But if there is no philosophical balm in Gilead, there is the world of the five senses, and a glorious world it may prove if you have only the health, courage, and contempt for the Chinese wall with which man has surrounded his instincts. There are no laws, except to be broken, no conventions that cannot be shattered. There is the blue sky, brother, and the air on the heath, brother! Drop the impedimenta and lead a free, roving life. How the world would wag without work no one tells us. Not didactic, the novelist disdains to draw a moral.

There is much Stirner, some Nietzsche in Sanine, who is a handsome young chap, a giant, and a "blond barbarian." It is the story of the return of the native to his home in a small town. He finds his mother as he left her, older, but as narrow as ever, and his sister Lydia, one of the most charming girls in Russian fiction. Sanine is surprised to note her development. He admires her — too much so for our Western taste. However, there is something monstrous in the moral and mental make-up of this hero, who is no hero. He may be a type, but I don't believe in types; there are only humans. His motto might be: What's the difference? He is passive, not with the fatalism of Oblomov, Gontcharov's hero; not with the apathy of Charles Bovary, or the timid passivity of Fred-

eric Moreau: he displays an indifference to the trivial things of life that makes him seem an idler on the scene.

When the time arrives for action he is no shulker. His sister has been ruined by a frivolous officer in garrison, and she attempts suicide. Her brother rescues her, not heroically, but philosophically, and shows her the folly of believing in words. Ruined! Very well, marry and forget! However, he drives the officer to suicide by publicly disgracing him. He refuses a duel, punches his head, and the silly soldier with his silly code of honour blows out his brains. A passive rôle is Sanine's in the composition of this elaborate canvas, the surface simplicity of which deceives us as to its polyphonic complexity. He remains in the background while about him play the little destinies of little souls. Yet he is always the fulcrum for a climax. I have not yet made up my mind whether Sanine is a great man or a thorough scoundrel. Perhaps both.

A temperamental and imaginative writer is Artzibashef. I first read him (1911) in French, the translation of Jacques Povolozky, and his style recalled, at times, that of Turgenev, possibly because of the language. In the German translation he is not so appealing; again perhaps of the difference in the tongues. As I can't read Russian, I am forced to fall back on translations, and they seldom give an idea of personal rhythm, unless it be a Turgenev trans-

lating into Russian the Three Tales of his friend Flaubert.

Nevertheless, through the veil of a foreign speech the genius of Artzibashef shines like a crimson sun in a mist. Of course, we miss the caressing cadence and rich sonorousness of the organ-toned Russian language. The English versions are excellent, though, naturally enough, occasionally chastened and abbreviated. I must protest here against the omission of a chapter in Breaking Point which is a key to the ending of the book. I mean the chapter in which is related the reason why the wealthy drunkard goes to the monastery, there to end his days. Years ago Mr. Howells said that we could never write of America as Dostoievsky did of Russia, and it was true enough at the time; nor, would we ever tolerate the nudities of certain Gallic novelists. Well, we have, and I am fain to believe that the tragic issues of American life should be given fuller expression, and with the same sincerity as Artzibashef's, whose strength is his sincerity, whose sincerity is a form of his genius.

The very air of America makes for optimism; our land of milk and honey may never produce such prophets of pessimism as Artzibashef, unless conditions change. But the lesson for our novelists is the courageous manner — and artistic, too — with which the Russian pursues the naked soul of mankind and dissects it. He notes, being a psychologist as well as a painter,

the exquisite recoil of the cerebral cells upon themselves which we call consciousness. Profoundly human in his sympathies, without being in the least sentimental, he paints full-length portraits of men and women with a flowing brush and a fine sense of character values. But he will never bend the bow of Balzac.

Vladimir Sanine is not his only successful portrait. In the book there are several persons: the disgraced student Younii, who is self-complacent to the point of morbidity; his lovely sister, and her betrothed. The officers are excellently delineated and differentiated, while the girls, Sina Karsavina and her friend the teacher, are extremely attractive.

Karsavina is a veracious personality. The poor little homeless Hebrew who desires light on the mystery of life could not be bettered by Dostoievsky; for that matter Artzibashef is partially indebted to Dostoievsky for certain traits of Ivan Lande — who is evidently patterned from Prince Myshkin in The Idiot. Wherever Sanine passes, trouble follows. He is looked on as possessing the evil eye, yet he does little but lounge about, drink hard, and make love to pretty girls. But as he goes he snuffs out ideals like candles.

As Artzibashef is a born story-teller, it must not be supposed that the book is unrelieved in its gloom. There are plenty of gay episodes, sensational, even shocking; a picnic, a shooting-party, and pastorals done in a way which

would have extorted the admiration of Turgenev. Thomas Hardy has done no better in his peasant life. There are various gatherings, chiefly convivial, a meeting of would-be intellectuals for self-improvement — related with blasting irony — and drinking festivals which are masterly in their sense of reality; add to these pages of nature descriptions, landscapes, pictures of the earth in all seasons and guises, revealing a passionate love of the soil which is truly Russian. You fairly smell the frosty air of his Winter days.

Little cause for astonishment that Sanine at its appearance provoked as much controversy, as much admiration and hatred as did Fathers and Sons of Turgenev. Vladimir Sanine is not as powerful as Bazarov the anarchist, but he is a pendant, he is an anarch of the new order, neither a propagandist by the act, but a philosophical anarch who lazily mutters: "Let the world wag; I don't care so that it minds its own business and lets me alone." With few exceptions most latter-day fiction is thin, papery, artificial, compared with Artzibashef's rich, red-blooded genius.

I have devoted so much attention to Sanine that little space is left for the other books, though they are all significant. Revolutionary Tales contains a strong companion picture to Sanine, the portrait of the metal-worker Schevyrjov, who is a revolutionist in the literal sense. His hunted life and death arouse a terrific im-

pression. The end is almost operatic. A captivating little working girl figures in one episode. It may be remarked in passing that Artzibashef does not paint for our delectation the dear dead drabs of yesteryear, nor yet the girl of the street who heroically brings bread to her starving family (as does Sonia in Crime and Punishment). Few outcasts of this sort are to be found in his pages, and those few are unflinchingly etched, as, for example, the ladies in The Millionaire.

This story, which is affiliated in ideas with Sanine, is Tolstoyian in the main issue, yet disconcertingly different in its interpretation. Wealth, too, may become an incitement to self-slaughter from sheer disgust. The story of Pasha Tumanow is autobiographical, and registers his hatred of the Russian grammar schools where suicides among the scholars are anything but infrequent. Morning Shadows relates the adventures of several young people who go to Petrograd to seek fame, but with tragic conclusions. The two girl students end badly, one a suicide, the other a prisoner of the police as an anarchist caught red-handed. A stupefying narrative in its horrid realism and sympathetic handling. The doctor gives us a picture of a pogrom in a tiny Russian province town. You simply shudder at the details of the wretched Jews shot down, ripped open, maltreated, and driven into the wilderness. It is a time for tears; though I cannot quite

believe in this doctor, who, while not a Jew, so sympathises with them that he lets die the Chief of Police that ordered the massacre. Another story of similar intensity, called Nina in the English translation, fills us with wonder that such outrages can go unpunished. But I am only interested in the art of the novelist, not in political conditions or their causes.

Perhaps the most touching story in Revolutionary Tales is The Blood Stain, confessedly beloved by its author. Again we are confronted by the uselessness of all attempts to right injustice. Might is right, ever was, ever will be. Again the victims of lying propagandists and the cruel law lie "on stretchers, with white eyes staring upward. In these eyes there was a look, a sad, questioning look of horror and despair." Always despair, in life or death, is the portion of these poor. [This was written in 1915, before the New Russia was born. Since the beginning of the war Artzibashef has served in the field and hospitals. He has written several plays, one of which, War, has been translated. It is a terrific arraignment of war. His latest story, The Woman Standing in the Midst, has not yet appeared here.]

Without suggesting a rigid schematology, there is a composition plan in his larger work that may be detected if the reader is not confused by the elliptical patterns and the massive mounds of minor details in his novel Breaking Point. The canvas is large and crowded, the

motivation subtly managed. As is the case with his novels, the drama plays in a provincial town, this time on the steppes, where the inhabitants would certainly commit suicide if the place were half as dreary as depicted. Some of them do so, and you are reminded of that curious, nervous disease, indigenous to Siberia, named by psychiatrists "myriachit," or the epidemic of imitation. A man, a sinister rascal, Naumow, preaches the greyness and folly of living, and this "Naumowism" sets by the ears three or four impressionable young men who make their exit with a bare bodkin or its equivalent. Naumow recalls a character in The Possessed, also the sinister hero of The Synagogue of Satan by the dramatic Polish writer Stanislaw Przybyszewski. To give us a central point the "chorus" of the novel is a little student who resembles a goldfinch, and has a birdlike way of piping about matters philosophical.

There are oceans of talk throughout the novels, talks about death. Really, you wonder how the Russians contrive to live at all till you meet them and discover what normal people they are. (It should not be forgotten that art must contain as an element of success a slight deformation of facts.) The student watches the comedy and tragedy of the town, his brain flaming with noble ideas for the regeneration of mankind! Alas! Naumow bids him reflect on the uselessness of suffering from self-privation so that some proletarian family may eat

roast larks in the thirtieth century. Eventually he succumbs to the contagion of resemblance, takes to drink, and hangs himself to a nail in the wall, his torn gum shoes, clinging to his feet, faithful to the last — they, Dickens-like, are shown from the start.

There is a nihilistic doctor — the most viable character of all about whose head hovers the aura of apoplexy — a particularly fascinating actress, an interesting consumptive, two wretched girls betrayed by a young painter (a Sanine type, *i. e.*, Max Stirnerism in action), while the officers of the garrison and club life are cunningly pictured. A wealthy manufacturer, with the hallmarks of Mr. Rogozhin in Dostoievsky's The Idiot, makes an awful noise till he luckily vanishes in a monastery. Suicide, rapine, disorder, drunkenness, and boredom permeate nearly every page. Breaking Point is the most poignant and intolerable book I ever read. It is the prose complement of Tschaikovsky's so-called Suicide Symphony. Browning is reversed. Here the devil is in heaven. All's wrong in the world! Yet it compels reflection and rereading. Why?

Because, like all of his writings, it is inevitable, and granting the exaggeration inherent in the nature of the subject, it is lifelike, though its philosophy is dangerously depressing. The little city of the steppes is the cemetery of the Seven Sorrows. However, in it, as in Sanine, there is many an oasis of consolation where san-

ity and cheerfulness and normal humans may be enjoyed. But I am loath to believe that young Russia, Holy Russia, as the mystagogues call her, has lost her central grip on the things that most count: above all, on religious faith. Their needs must she pray as prayed Des Esseintes in Huysmans's novel A Rebours: "Take pity, O Lord, on the Christian who doubts, on the sceptic who desires to believe, on the convict of life who embarks alone, in the night, beneath a sky no longer lit by the consoling beacons of ancient faith."

CHAPTER V

A NOTE ON HENRY JAMES

I

In company with other distinguished men who have passed away during the progress of the war, the loss of Henry James was passably chronicled. News from the various battle-fields took precedence over the death of a mere man of literary genius. This was to be expected. Nor need the fact be disguised that his secession from American citizenship may have increased the coolness which prevailed, still prevails, when the name of Mr. James is mentioned in print. More English than the English, he only practised what he preached, though tardily in the matter of his British naturalisation. That he did not find all the perfections in his native land is a personal matter; but that he should be neglected in favour of mediocrity is simply the penalty a great artist pays for his devotion to art. There is no need of indignation in the matter. Time rights such critical wrongs. Consider the case of Stendhal. The fiction of Henry James is for the future.

James seceded years ago from the English traditions, from Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray,

and George Eliot. The Wings of a Dove, The Ambassadors, The Golden Bowl are fictions that will influence future novelists. In our own days we see what a power James has been; a subtle breath on the waters of creation; Paul Bourget, Edith Wharton, even Joseph Conrad, and many minor English novelists. His later work, say, beginning with The Tragic Muse, is the prose equivalent of the seven arts in a revolutionary ferment. A marked tendency in the new movements is to throw overboard superfluous technical baggage. The James novel is one of grand simplifications.

As the symphony was modified by Liszt into the symphonic poem and later emerged in the shape of the tone-poem by Richard Strauss, so the novel of manners evolved from Flaubert's Sentimental Education, which, despite its "heavenly length," contains in solution all that the newer men have accomplished. Zola patterned after it in the prodigious Rougon-Macquart series; Daudet found therein the impressionism of his Sapho anticipated; Maupassant and Huysmans delved patiently and practised characteristic variations. Flaubert is the father of realism as he is part parent of symbolism. His excessive preoccupation with style and his attaching esoteric significance to words sound the note of symbolism. Now Henry James disliked Sentimental Education — like other great critics he had his blind side — yet he did not fail to benefit by the radical formal

changes introduced by Flaubert, changes as revolutionary as those of Wagner in the music-drama. I call the later James novel a simplification. All the conventional chapter endings are dispensed with; many are suspended cadences. The accustomed and thrice-barren modulations from event to event are swept away; unprepared dissonances are of continual occurrence. There is no descriptive padding — that bane of second-class writers; nor are we informed at every speech of the name of a character. This elliptical method James absorbed from Flaubert, while his sometime oblique psychology is partly derived from Stendhal; indeed, without Stendhal both Meredith and James would have been sadly shorn of their psychological splendour. Nor is the shadow of Turgenev missing, not to mention that of Jane Austen.

Possibly the famous "third manner" of James was the result of his resorting to dictation; the pen inhibits where speech does not. These things make difficult reading for a public accustomed to the hypnotic passes of successful fiction-mongers. In James nothing is forestalled, nothing is obvious, one is for ever turning the curve of the unexpected. The actual story may be discouraging in its bareness, yet the situations are seldom fantastic. (The Turn of the Screw is an exception.) You rub your eyes as you finish; for with all your credulity, painful in its intensity, you have assisted at a pictorial evocation; both picture and evoca-

tion reveal magic in their misty attenuations. And there is ever the triumph of poetic feeling over banal sentiment. The portraiture in Milly Theale and Maggie Verver is clairvoyant. Milly's life is a miracle, her ending, art superlative. The Wings of a Dove is filled with the faintly audible tread of destiny behind the arras of life. The reverberations are almost microphonic with here and there a crescendo or a climax. The spiritual string music of Henry James is more thrilling to the educated ear than the sound of the big drum and the blaring of trumpets. The implacable curiosity of the novelist concerning causes that do not seem final has been amply dealt with by Mr. Brownell. The question whether his story is worth the telling is a critical impertinence too often uttered; what most concerns us now in the James case is his manner, not his matter. All the rest is life.

As far as his middle period his manner is limpidity itself; the later style is a jungle of inversions, suspensions, elisions, repetitions, echoes, transpositions, transformations, neologisms, in which the heads of young adjectives despairingly gaze from afar at the verbs which come thundering at the close of sentences leagues long. It is bewildering, but more bewildering is this peculiarly individual style when draughted into smooth journalistic prose. Nothing remains. Henry James has not spoken. His dissonances cannot be resolved except in the

terms of his own matchless art. His meanings evaporate when phrased in our vernacular. This may prove a lot of negating things, or it may not. Why prose should lag behind its sister arts I can't say; possibly because every pothouse politician is supposed to speak it. For that matter any one who has dipped into the well of English undefiled, seventeenth-century literature, must realise that nowadays we write a parlous prose. However, it is not a stately prose that James essayed. The son of a metaphysician and moralist — the writings of Henry James, the elder, are far from negligible — the brother of the greatest American psychologist, the late William James of brilliant memory, it need hardly be added that character problems are of more interest to this novelist than the external qualities of rhetorical sonority, or the fascination of glowing surfaces. You can no more read aloud a page of James than you can read aloud De Goncourt. For Flaubert, who modelled his magnificent prose harmonies on the Old Testament, Shakespeare, Bossuet, and Châteaubriand, the final test of noble prose is the audible reading thereof. Flaubert called it "spouting." The James prose appeals rather to the inner ear. Nuance and overtones not dazzling tropical hues or rhythmical variety. Henry James is a law unto himself. His novels may be a precursor of the books our grandchildren will enjoy when the hurly-burly of noisy adventure, cheap historical vapidities,

and still cheaper drawing-room struttings shall have vanished. (But, like the poor, the stupid reader we shall always have with us.) In the fiction of the future a more complete synthesis will be attained. An illuminating essay by Arthur Symons places George Meredith among the decadents, the murderers of their mother tongue, the men who shatter syntax to serve their artistic ends. Henry James belonged to this group for a longer time than the majority of his critics suspected. In his ruthless disregard of the niceties and conventionalities of sentence-structure I see the outcome of his dictation. Yet no matter how crabbed and involved is his page, a character always emerges from the smoke of his muttered enchantments. The chief fault is not his obscurity (his prose, like the prose in Browning's Sordello, is packed with too many meanings), but that his character always speaks in purest Jacobean. So do the people in Balzac's crowded, electric world. So the men and women of Dickens and Meredith. It is the fault — or virtue — of all subjective genius; however, not a fault or virtue of Flaubert or Turgenev or Tolstoy. All in all, Henry James is a distinctly American novelist, a psychologist of extraordinary power and divination. He has pinned to paper the soul of the cosmopolitan. The obsession of the moral problem that we feel in Hawthorne is not missing. Be his manner never so cryptic, his deep-veined humanity may be felt by those

who read him aright. His Americans abroad suffer a deep-sea change; a complete gamut of achieved sensibility divides Daisy Miller from Maggie Verver. Henry James is a faithful Secretary to Society — the phrase is Balzac's — to the American afloat from his native moorings as well as at home. And his exquisite notations are the glory of English fiction.

II

Before me lies an autograph letter from Henry James to his friend Doctor Rice. It is dated December 26, 1904, and the address 21 East Eleventh Street. It thus concludes: "I am not one of 'The Bostonians,' but was born in this city April 15, 1843. Believe me, truly yours, Henry James." Although he died a naturalised Englishman, there seems to be some confusion as to his birthplace in the minds of his English critics. In Ford Madox Hueffer's critical study, Henry James, we read on page 95 that the life of James "began in New England in 1843." He was born in America in 1843, then a land where culture was rare! That delightful condescension in foreigners is still extant. Now this isn't such a serious matter, for Henry James was a citizen of the world; but the imputation of a New England birthplace does matter, because it allows the English critic — and how many others? — to perform variations on the theme of Puritanism, the Puritanism of his art. James as a tem-

peramental Puritan — one is forced to capitalise the unhappy word! Apart from the fact that there is less Puritanism in New England than in the Middle West, James is not a Puritan. He does not possess the famous New England conscience. He would have been the first to repudiate the notion. For him the Puritan temperament has a "faintly acrid perfume." To ascribe to Puritanism the seven deadly virtues and refinement, sensibility, intellectuality, is a common enough mistake. James never made that mistake. He knew that all the good things of life are not in the exclusive possession of the Puritans. He must not be identified with the case he studies. Strictly speaking, while he was on the side of the angels, like all great artists, he is not a moralist; indeed, he is our first great "immoralist," a term that has supplanted the old-fashioned amoralist. And he wrote the most unmoral short story in the English language, one that also sets the spine trilling because of its supernatural element as never did Poe, or De Maupassant.

Another venerable witticism, which has achieved the pathos of distance, was made a quarter of a century ago by George Moore. Mr. Moore said: "Henry James went to France and read Turgenev. W. D. Howells stayed at home and read Henry James." To lend poignancy to this mild epigram Mr. Hueffer misquotes it, substituting the name of De Maupassant for Turgenev's. A rather uncanny

combination — Henry and Guy. A still more aged "wheeze" bobs up in the pages of Mr. Hueffer. Need we say that it recites the ancient saw about William James, the fictionist, and his brother Henry, the psychologist. None of these things is in the least true. With the prudishness and peanut piety of puritanism Henry James has nothing in common. He did not alone read Turgenev, he met him and wrote of him with more sympathy and understanding than he did of Flaubert or Baudelaire; and Mr. Howells never wrote a page that resembled either the Russian's or the American's fiction. Furthermore, James is a masterly psychologist and a tale-teller. To the credit of his latest English critics this is acknowledged, and generously.

Mr. Hueffer is an accomplished craftsman in many literary fields, he writes with authority, though too often in a superlative key. But how James would have winced when he read in Mr. Hueffer's book that he is or was "the greatest of living men." This surely is a planet-struck phrase. The Hueffer study is stuffed with startling things. He bangs Balzac over the head. He tells the truth about Flaubert, whose Sentimental Education is an entire Human Comedy. He thinks ill of "big business," that "business and whatever takes place 'down-town' or in the city is simply not worth the attention of any intelligent being. It is a manner of dirty little affairs incom-

petently handled by men of the lowest class of intelligence." But all this in a volume about the most serene and luminous intelligence of our times. Mr. Hueffer also "goes for" James as critic. He once dared to couple the name of the "odious" George Eliot with Flaubert's. It does rather take the breath away, but, after all, didn't the tolerant and catholic critic who was Henry James say that no one is constrained to like any particular kind of writing? As to the "cats and monkeys, monkeys and cats — all human life is there," of The Madonna of the Future, we need not take the words as a final message; nor are the other phrases quoted: "The soul is immortal certainly — if you've got one, but most people haven't! Pleasure would be right if it were pleasure right through, but it never is." Mr. Hueffer says that James "found English people who were just people singularly nasty," and who can say him nay after reading The Sacred Fount? But he ends on the right note: "And for a man to have attained to international rank with phrases intimately national is the supreme achievement of writers — a glory that is reserved only for the Dantes, the Goethes, and the Shakespeares, who none the less remain supremely national." Neither Mr. Hueffer nor Miss West is in doubt as to the essential Americanism of Henry James. He is almost as American as Howells, who is our Anthony Trollope, plus style and vision. And Trollope, by the way, will loom larger in

the future despite his impersonality and microscopic manner.

The James art is Cerebral Comedy, par excellence. To alter his own words, he plays his intellectual instrument to perfection. He is a portraitist doubled by a psychologist. His soul is not a solitary pool in a midnight forest, but an unruffled lake, sun-smitten or cloud-shadowed; yet in whose depths there is a moving mass of exquisite living things. His pages reverberate with the under hum of humanity. We may not exactly say of him as Hazlitt said of Walter Scott: "His works, taken altogether, are almost like a new edition of human nature." But we can follow with the coda of that same dictum: "This is indeed to be an author." Many more than the dozen superior persons mentioned by Huysmans enjoy the James novels. His swans are not always immaculate, but they are not "swans of the cesspool," to quote Landor. There is never an odour of leaking gas in his premises, as he once remarked of the D'Annunzio fiction. He has the cosmopolitan soul. There is no slouch in his spiritual gait. Like Renan, he abhorred the "horrible mania of certitude" to be found in the writing of his realistic contemporaries. He does not always dot the "i's" of his irony, a subrisive irony. But the spiritual antennæ which he puts forth so tentatively always touch real things, not conjectural. And what tactile sense he boasts. He peeps into the glowing core of

emotion, but seldom describes it. His ears are for overtones, not the brassy harmonies of the obvious, of truths, flat and flexible. Yet what novelist has kept his ear so close to quotidian happenings, and with what dignity and charm in his crumbling cadences? Not even that virtuoso of the ugly, Huysmans, than whom no writer of the past century ever "rendered" surfaces into such impeccable truth, with such implacable ferocity, is as clairvoyant as James.

Fustian and thunder form no part of the James stories, which are like a vast whispering gallery, the dim reverberations of which fill the listening ear. He is an "auditive" as well as a "visualist," to employ the precious classification of the psychiatrists. His astute senses tell him of a world which we are only beginning to comprehend. He is never obscure, never recondite; but, like Browning, he sends a veritable multiplex of ideas along a single wire. Mr. Howells has rightly said of him that it is not well to pursue the meanings of an author to the very heart of darkness. However, readers as a rule like their fiction served on a shiny plate; above all, they don't like a story to begin in one key and end in another. If it's to be pork and molasses or "hog and hominy" (George Meredith's words), then let it be these delectable dishes through every course. But James is ever in modulation. He tosses his theme ballwise in the air, and while its spirals spin and bathe in the blue he weaves a web of

gold and lace, and it is marvellously spun. He is more atmospheric than linear. His theme is shown from a variety of angles, but the result is synthetic. Elizabeth Luther Cary has pointed out that he is not a remorseless analyst. He does not take the mechanism of his marionette apart, but lets us examine it in completeness. As a psychologist he stands midway between Stendhal and Turgenev. He interprets feeling, rather than fact.

Like our sister planet, the moon, he has his rhythmic moments of libration; he then reveals his other side, a profoundly human, emotional one. He is not all frosty intellect. But he holds in horror the facile expression of the sentiments. It's only too easy to write for those avid of sentimentalism, or to express what Thomas Huxley calls "sensualistic caterwauling." In the large, generous curve of his temperament there is room for all life, but not for a lean or lush statement of life. You may read him in a state of mellow exasperation, but you cannot deny his ultimate sincerity. There is no lack of substance in his densely woven patterns, for patterns there are, though the figure be difficult to piece out. His route of emerald is elliptical; follow him who dare! A "wingy mystery." He is all vision. He does not always avoid naked issues. His thousand and one characters are significantly vital. His is not "the shadow land of American fiction"; simply his supreme tact of omission has dispensed with

the entire banal apparatus of fiction as commonly practised. To use a musical example: his prose is like the complicated score of some latter-day composer, and his art, like music, is a solvent. He discards lumbering descriptions, antique melodramatics, set developments and dénouements, mastodonic structures. The sharp savour of character is omnipresent. His very pauses are eloquent. He evokes. His harmonic tissue melts into remoter harmonic perspectives. He composes in every tonality. Continuity of impression is unfailing. When reading him sympathetically one recalls the saying of Maurice Barres: "For an accomplished spirit there is but one dialogue, that between our two egos — the momentary ego that we are and the ideal one toward which we strive." For Jacobeans this interior dialogue, with its "secondary intention" marches like muted music through the pages of the latter period. Henry James will always be a touchstone for the tasteless.

CHAPTER VI

GEORGE SAND

Thou large-brained woman and large-hearted man, self-called George Sand!

—Mrs. Browning.

I

Who reads George Sand nowadays? was asked at the time of her centenary (she was born, 1804; died, 1876). Paris responded in gallant phrases. She was declared one of the glories of French literature. Nevertheless, we are more interested in the woman, in her psychology, than in her interminable novels. The reason is simple; her books were built for her day, not to endure. She never created a vital character. Her men and women are bundles of attributes, neither flesh nor blood nor good red melodrama. She was a wonderful journalist, one is tempted to say the first of her sex, and the first feminist. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was a shriller propagandist, yet she accomplished no more for the cause than her French neighbour, not alone because she didn't smoke big cigars or wear trousers, but on general principles. In a word, Mrs. Godwin didn't exactly practise what she preached and

George Sand did. For her there was no talk of getting the vote; her feminism was a romantic revolt, not economic or political rebellion. George Sand should be enshrined as the patron saint of female suffragism. By no means a deep thinker, for she reflected as in a mirror the ideas of the intellectual men she met, she had an enormous vogue. Her reputation was world-wide.

We know more about her now, thanks to the three volumes recently published by Vladimir Karénine (the pen-name of a Russian lady, Mme. Komaroff, the daughter of Dmitri Stassow). This writer has brought her imposing work (thus far over 1,700 pages) down to 1848, and, as much happened in the life of her heroine after that, we may expect at least two more fat volumes. Her curiosity has been insatiable. She has read all the historical and critical literature dealing with Sand. She has at first-hand from friends and relatives facts hitherto unpublished, and she is armed with a library of documents. More, she has read and digested the hundred-odd stories of the fecund writer, and actually analyses their plots, writes at length of the characters, and incidentally throws light on her own intellectual processes.

Mme. Karénine is not a broad critic. She is a painstaking historian. While some tales of Sand are worth reading — The Devil's Pool, Letters of a Voyager, even Consuelo, above all, her autobiography — the rest is a burden to

the spirit. Her facility astounds, and also discourages. She confesses that with her writing was like the turning on of a water-tap, the stream always flowed, a literary hydrant. Awaken her in the night and she could resume her task. She was of the centrifugal temperament, hence the resultant shallowness of her work. She had charm. She had style, serene, flowing, also tepid and fatuous, the style detested by Charles Baudelaire, and admired by Turgenev and Renan and Lamennais. Baudelaire remarked of this "best seller" that she wrote her chefs d'œuvre as if they were letters, and posted them. The "style coulant," praised by bourgeois critics, he abhorred, as it lacked accent, relief, individuality. "She is the Prudhomme of immorality," he said — not a bad definition — and "she is stupid, heavy, and a chatterer." She loves the proletarian, and her sentiment is adapted to the intelligent wife of the concierge and the sentimental harlot. Which shows that even such a versatile critic as Baudelaire had his prejudices. The sweetness and nobility of her nature were recognised by all her associates.

Nietzsche is no less impolite. She derives from Rousseau — he might have added Byron, also — she is false, artificial, inflated, exaggerated; . . . her style is of a variegated wall-paper pattern. She betrays her vulgarity in her ambition to expose her generous feelings. She is, like all the Romantics, a cold, insufferable

artist. She wound herself up like a timepiece and — wrote. Nietzsche, like his great master, Schopenhauer, was never a worshipper of the irresponsible sex. And her immorality? Père Didon said that her books are more immoral than Zola's, because more insidious, tinted as they are with false ideas and sentiments. George Sand immoral? What bathos! How futile her fist-shakings at conventional morality. As well say Marie Corelli or Ouida is immoral. This literature of gush and gabble is as dangerous to the morals of our time as the Ibsen plays or Æsop's fables.

Unreality, cheap socialism, and sentiment of the downtrodden shop girl are the stigmata of the Sand school. She has written many memorable pages, many beautiful pages; such masters as Sainte-Beuve, Balzac, Delacroix, Flaubert, Ballanche, Heine, Dostoievsky, and Turgenev have told us so. Her idyllic stories are of an indubitable charm. But her immorality, like her style, is old-fashioned — there is a dating mark even in immorality, for if, as Ibsen maintained, all truths stale and die after two decades, how much less life may be allowed a lie? Your eternal verities, then, may be as evanescent as last year's mist.

Mme. Karénine does not belong to the School of Moral Rehabilitation, so prevalent here and in England. She does not spare her subject; indeed, makes out a worse case than we had supposed. She is not a prude and, if critically

she is given to discovering a masterpiece under every bush planted by that indefatigable gardener, George Sand, she is quite aware of George's flagrant behaviour. The list of lovers is a longer one than given by earlier biographers. Dumas fils, a close observer of the novelist, asserts that she had no temperament at all, thus corroborating the earlier testimony of Heine. This further complicates the problem. She was not, then, a perverse pursuer of young genius, going about seeking whom she could devour, and indulging in what Mother Church calls morose delectation! A "cold devil" — à la Félicien Rops. I doubt this. Maternal she was. I once described her as a maternal nymphomaniac, a metaphysical Messalina. She presided at numerous artistic accouchements; she was, pre-eminently, the critical midwife to many poets, pianists, painters, composers, and thinkers. If she made some of them unhappy, she brought into the life of others much happiness. Matthew Arnold believed in her, so did the Brownings, Elizabeth and Robert; George Eliot admired her; she, too, was rowing in the same kind of a moral galley, but with heavier oars and through the Sargossian seas of British prudery.

In contact with the finest minds of her times, George Sand was neither a moral monster nor yet the arrant Bohemian that legend has fashioned of her. She was a fond mother, and a delightful grandmother. She had the feather-

bed temperament, and soothed masculine nerves exacerbated by the cruel exigencies of art. Jules Laforgue would have said of her: Stability, thy name is Woman! She died in the odour of domestic sanctity, mourned by her friends, and the idol of the literary world.

How account for her uprightness of character, her abundant virtues — save one? She was as true as the compass to her friends, to her family. Either she has been slandered or else she is an anomaly in the moral world. In either case we need a new transvaluation of morals. She was not made of the stuff of courtesans, she refused to go to the devil. Like Aspasia, she was an immoralist. As an artist she could have had social position. But she didn't crave it; she didn't crave notoriety; paradoxical as it may sound, notoriety was thrust upon her. At Nohant, her château in Berri, there was usually a conglomeration of queer people: Socialists, reformers, crazy dreamers, artists, and poets, occasionally working men in their blouses. Of that mystic crew Matthew Arnold could have repeated his famous "What a set!" which he despairingly uttered about the Shelley-Godwin gatherings.

II

George Sand was a normal woman. She preferred the society of men; with women she was always on her guard, a cat sleeping with

one eye open. Her friendship with Mme. D'Agoult, the elective affinity of Liszt, soon ended. She never summered in soft Sapphic seas, nor hankered after poetic Leucadian promontories. She never did approvingly quote the verse of Baudelaire beginning: "Lo! the Lesbians their sterile sex advancing." She was a woman from top to toe. Nor did she indulge often in casual gallant adventures. Her affairs were romantic. With the author of Carmen her spiritual thermometer registered at its lowest. She endured him just eight days, and Mérimée is responsible for the tasteless anecdote which he tells as his reason for leaving her. He saw her of a cold morning making the fire, her head in curl-papers, and attired in an old dressing-gown. No passion could survive that shock, and selfish Prosper at once grew frigid.

A French expression may suit George: She always had her heart "en compote." And she was incorrigibly naïve — they called it "Idealism" in those days — witness her affair with Doctor Pagello in Venice. The first handsome Italian she met she fell in love with and allowed poor sick Alfred de Musset to return to Paris alone, although she had promised his mother to guard him carefully. He was suffering from an attack of delirium tremens in Venice. He had said of himself: "I am not tender, I am excessive." He was. His name, unlike Keats's, is writ in absinthe, not water. Nevertheless, you can reread him.

But the separation didn't kill him. He was twenty-two, George six years older. Their affair struggled along about six months. Alfred consoled himself with Rachel and many others. He was more poet than artist, more artist than man; and a pretty poor specimen of a man. He wrote the history of his love for George. She followed suit. This sphinx of the ink-well was a journalist born. She used her lovers for "copy"; and for that matter Byron and Goethe did the same. George always discoursed of her thirst for the "infinite." It was only a species of moral indigestion. Every romance ended in disillusionment. The one with Chopin lasted the longest, nearly ten years. She first met the Pole in 1836, not in 1837, as the Chopinists believe. Liszt introduced them. Later Chopin quarrelled with Liszt about her. Chopin did not like her at first; blue stockings were not to the taste of this conventional man of the world. Yet he succumbed. He died of the liaison itself, rather than from the separation in 1847. Sand divined the genius of Chopin before many of his critical contemporaries. She had the courage — and the wisdom — to write that one of his Tiny Preludes contained more genuine music than much of Meyerbeer's mighty Trumpetings. And Meyerbeer ruled the world of music when she said this.

The immediate cause of this separation I hinted at in my early study of Chopin. So-

lange Sand, the daughter of George, was a thoroughly perverse girl. She not only flirted with Chopin, seeking to lure him from her mother — truly a Gallic triangle — but she so contrived matters that her mother was forced to allow the intriguing girl to marry her lover, Clésinger, the sculptor. The knowledge of this Mme. Sand kept from Chopin for a while because she feared that he would side with Solange. He promptly did so, being furious at the deception. He it was who broke with George, possibly aided thereto by her nagging. He saw much of Solange, and pecuniarily helped her young and unhappy household. He announced by letter to George the news that she was a grandmother; they occasionally corresponded.

Clésinger did not get on with his mother-in-law. She once boxed his ears. He drank, gambled, and brutally treated Solange. George Sand suffered the agony of seeing in her daughter's life a duplicate of her own. Her husband, François-Casimir Dudevant, a debauched country squire, drank, was unfaithful, and beat her betimes. He treated his dogs better. No wonder she ran away to Paris, there to live with Jules Sandeau. (She had married in 1822, and brought her husband five hundred thousand francs.)

But, rain or shine, joy or sorrow, she did her daily stunt at her desk. She was a journalist and wrote by the sweat of her copious

soul. She was the rare possessor of the Will-to-Sit-Still, as metaphysicians would say. She thought with her nerves and felt with her brain. She was, morally speaking, magnificently disorganised. She was a subtle mixer of praise and poison, and her autobiography is stuffed with falsehoods. She couldn't help falsifying facts, for she was an incurable sentimentalist. Heine has cruelly said that women writers write with one eye on the paper, the other on some man; all except the Countess Hahn-Hahn, who had one eye. George Sand wrote with both eyes fixed on a man, or men. Charity should cover a multitude of her missteps. In her case we don't know all. We know too much. Still, I believe she was more sinned against than sinning.

III

Since the fatal day when our earliest ancestors left the Garden of Eden, when Adam digged and Eve span, there have been a million things that women were told they shouldn't attempt, that is, not without the penalty of losing their "womanliness," or interfering with their family duties. But they continued, did these same refractory females, to overcome obstacles, leap social hurdles, make mock of antique taboos, and otherwise disport themselves as if they were free individuals, and not petticoated with absurd prejudices. They

loved. They married. They became mothers. George Sand was in the vanguard of this small army of protestants against the prevailing moral code (for woman only). Her unhappy marriage was a blazing bonfire of revolt. The misunderstood woman at last had her innings. Sand stood for all that was wicked and hateful in the eyes of law and order. Yet, compared with the feminine fiction of our days, Sand's is positively idylic. She is one parent of the Woman movement, unpalatable as her morals may prove to churchgoers. She acted in life what so many of our belligerent ladies urge others to do — and never attempt on their own account. George was brave. And George was polyandrous. If she hadn't much temperament, she had the courage to throw her bonnet over the windmill when she saw the man she liked, and if she suffered later, she, being an artist, made a literary asset of these sufferings. She is the true ancestor of the New Woman. Her books were considered so immoral by her generation that to be seen reading them was enough to damn a man. Other males, other tales.

She dared "to live her own life," as the Ibsenites say, and she was the original Ibsen girl, proof-before-all-letters. I haven't the slightest doubt that to-day she would speak to street crowds, urging the vote for woman. Why shouldn't woman vote? she might be supposed to argue. There will be less dyspepsia in America when women desert the

kitchen for the halls of legislation. Men, perforce, are better cooks. So, by all means, let woman vote. Will it not be an acid test applied to our alleged democratic institutions? George Sand believed herself to be a social-democrat. She trusted in Pierre Leroux's mysticism, trusted in the phalanstery of Fourier, in the doctrines of Saint-Simon, the latter especially because of her intimacy with Franz Liszt; nevertheless, she might shudder at the emancipation of ideas in our century, and, as she had a sensitive soul, modern democracy might prove for her a very delirium of ugliness. She was always æsthetic. She could portray with a tender pen the stammering litany of young caresses, but she couldn't face a fact in her fiction. Her Indianas, Lélias, and the other romantic insurgents against society are Byronic, Laras in petticoats. All rose-water and rage, they are as rare in life as black lightning on a blue sky. Her stories are as sad and as ridiculous as a nightcap.

IV

George Sand was not beautiful. Edouard Grenier declares that she was short and stout. "Her eyes were wonderful, but a little too close together." Do you recall Heine's phrase, "Femme avec l'œil sombre"? Black they were, those eyes, and they reminded Grenier at once of unpolished marble and velvet. "Her

nose was thick and not overshapely. She spoke with great simplicity and her manner was very quiet." With these rather negative physical attractions she conquered men like Napoleon. Even prim President Thiers tried to kiss her and her indignation was epical. He is said to have giggled in a silly way when reproved. It seems incredible. (Did you ever see the Bonnat portrait of this philistine statesman?) Liszt never wholly yielded to her. Mérimée despised her in his chilly fashion. Michel de Bourges treated her rudely. Poor Alfred de Musset — who, when he was short of money, would dine in an obscure tavern, and, with a toothpick in his mouth, would stand at the entrance of some fashionable boulevard café — seems to have loved her romantically, the sort of love she craved. What was her attraction? She had brains and magnetism, but that she could have loved all the lovers she is credited with is impossible.

There is, to begin at the beginning, Jules Sandeau, who was followed by De Musset; after him the deluge: Doctor Pagello — who was jilted when he followed her to Paris; Michel de Bourges, Pierre Leroux, Félicien Mallefille, Chopin, Mérimée, Manceau, and the platonic friendship with Flaubert. This was her sanest friendship; the correspondence proves it. She went to the Magny dinners with Flaubert, Goncourt, Renan, Zola, Turgenev, and Daudet. Her influence on the grumbling giant of

Croisset was tonic. It was she who should have written Sentimental Education. But where is that sly old voluptuary, Sainte-Beuve, or the elder Dumas (the Pāsha of many tales), or Liszt, who was her adorer for a brief period, notwithstanding Mme. Karénine's denial? She denies the Leroux affair, too. Are these all? Who dare say?

Dumas fils carried a bundle of Chopin's letters from Warsaw and Sand buried them at Nohant. This story, doubted by Doctor Niecks, has been corroborated since by Mme. Karénine. What a loss for inquisitive critics! George was named Lucile Aurore Dupin, and she was descended from a choice chain of rowdy and remotely royal ancestors. In her mature years she became optimistic, proper, matronly. She was a cheerful milch cow for her two children. It is delicious comedy to read the warnings to her son Maurice against actresses. Solange she gave up as hopelessly selfish, wicked for the sheer sake of wickedness, a sort of inverted and evil art-for-art.

Nearly all the facts of the quarrel with Solange are to be found in Samuel Rocheblave's George Sand et Sa Fille. After Solange left Clésinger she formed a literary partnership with the Marquis Alfieri, nephew of the great Italian poet. "Soli" opened a salon in Paris, to which came Gambetta, Jules Ferry, Floquet, Taine, Hervé, Henry Fouquier, and Weiss, the critic who describes her as having the "curved

Hebraic nose of her mother and hair cold black." She, too, must write novels. She died at Nohant, her mother's old home, in 1899. Maurice Sand, her brother, died ten years earlier.

Jules Claretie tells an amusing story about Sand. In 1870, when she was old and full of honours, she went one day to visit the Minister of Instruction. There, being detained in the antechamber, she fell into a pleasant conversation with a well-groomed, decorated old gentleman. After ten minutes' chat the unknown consulted his watch, arose, and bowed to Mme. Sand. "If I could always find such a charming companion I would visit the Ministry often," he gallantly said, and went away. The novelist called an attendant. "Who is that amiable gentleman?" she asked. "Ah, that is M. Jules Sandeau of the French Academy." And he, her first flame in Paris, inquired the name of the lady. What a lot of head-shaking and moralising must have ensued! The story is pretty enough to have been written in the candied thunder of Sand herself.

De Lenz, author of several rather neglected volumes about musicians, did not like Sand because she was rude to him when introduced by Chopin. He asked her concierge, "What is Madame properly called — Dudevant?" "Ah, Monsieur, she has many names," was the reply. But it is her various names, and not her novels, that interest us, and will intrigue the attention of posterity.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

I

WHEN the supreme master of the historical novel modestly confessed that he could do the "big bow-wow strain," but to Jane Austen must be accorded the palm of exquisite craftsmanship, there was then no question upon the critical map of the so-called "great American novel." Sir Walter Scott — to whom such authors of historical novels as Châteaubriand and his Martyrs, the Salammbô of Flaubert, and that well-nigh perfect fiction, The History of Henry Esmond, by Thackeray, yield precedence — might have achieved the impossible: the writing of a library, epitomising the social history of "These States" — as Walt Whitman would say. After Scott no name but Balzac's occurs to the memory; Balzac, who laid all France under his microscope (and France is all of a piece, not the checker-board of nationalities we call America). Even the mighty Tolstoy would have balked the job. And if these giants would have failed, what may be said of their successors? The idea of a great American novel is an "absolute," and nature abhors an absolute, despite the belief of some metaphy-

sicians to the contrary. Yet the notion still obtains and inquests are held from time to time, and the opinions of contemporary novelists are taken toll of; as if each man and woman could give aught else but their own side of the matter, that side which is rightfully enough personal and provincial. The question is, after all, an affair for critics, and the great American novel will be in the plural; thousands perhaps. America is a chord of many nations, and to find the key-note we must play much and varied music.

While a novelist may be cosmopolitan at his own risk, a critic should be ever so. (Consider the names of such widely contrasted critical temperaments as Sainte-Beuve, Taine, De Gourmont, Matthew Arnold, Brandes, Swinburne, Arthur Symons, Havelock Ellis, Henry James, Gosse, and W. C. Brownell; all cosmopolitan as well as national. The sublime tenuities of Henry James, like the black music of Michael Artzibashef, are questions largely temperamental. But the Russian is all Slavic, and no one would maintain that Mr. James shows a like ingrained nationalism. Nevertheless, he is American, though dealing only with a certain side of American life, the cosmopolitan phase. At his peril an American novelist sails eastward to describe the history of his countrymen abroad. With the critic we come upon a different territory. He may go gadding after new mud-gods (the newest god invented by

man is always the greatest), for the time being, and return to his native heath mentally refreshed and broadened by his foreign outing. Not so the maker of fiction. Once he cuts loose his balloon he is in danger of not getting home again.

Mr. James is a splendid case for us; he began in America and landed in England, there to stay. Our other felicitous example of cosmopolitanism is Henry Blake Fuller, the author of The Chevalier Pensieri Vani and The Châtelaine de la Trinité, who was so widely read in the nineties. After those charming excursions into a rapidly vanishing Europe Mr. Fuller reversed the proceeding of James; he returned to America and composed two novels of high artistic significance, The Cliff Dwellers and With the Procession, which, while they continued the realistic tradition of William Dean Howells, were also the forerunners of a new movement in America. It is not necessary to dwell now on The Last Refuge, or on that masterly book of spiritual parodies, The Puppet-Booth. But Mr. Fuller did not write the great American novel. Neither did Mr. Howells, nor Mr. James. Who has? No one. Is there such a thing? Without existing it might be described in Celtic fashion, this mythical work, as pure fiction. Let us admit for the sake of argument that if it were written by some unknown monster of genius, it would, like Lewis Carroll's Snark, turn into a Boojum.

THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

Henry James has said that no one is compelled to admire any particular sort of writing; that the province of fiction is all life, and he has also wisely remarked that "when you have no taste you have no discretion, which is the conscience of taste," and may we add, when you have no discretion you perpetrate the shocking fiction with which America is deluged at this hour. We are told that the new writers have altered the old canons of bad taste, but "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose." A liquorish sentimentality is the ever-threatening rock upon which the bark of young American novelists goes to pieces. (Pardon the mixed metaphor.) Be sentimental and you will succeed! We agree with Dostoievsky that in fiction, as well as in life, there are no general principles, only special cases. But these cases, could they not be typical? even if there are not types, only individuals. And are men and women so inthralled by the molasses of sentimentalism in life? Have the motion-pictures hopelessly deranged our critical values? I know that in America charity covers a multitude of mediocrities, nevertheless, I am loath to believe that all one reads in praise of wretched contemporary fiction is meant in earnest.

Well, chacun à ses dégoûts! The "thrilling" detective story, the romantic sonorities of the ice cream-soda woman novelist? — with a triple-barrelled name, as Rudyard Kipling put it once upon a time — or that church of Heavenly

Ennui, the historical novel — what a cemetery of ideas, all of them! An outsider must be puzzle-pated by this tumult of tasteless writing and worse observation. However, history in fiction may be a cavalcade of shining shadows, brilliant, lugubrious, dull, or joyful happenings; but where Thackeray succeeded multitudes have failed. Who shall bend the bow of that Ulysses? Native talent, subtle and robust, we possess in abundance; thus far it has cultivated with success its own parochial garden — which is as it should be. The United States of Fiction. America is Cosmopolis.

II

As to the Puritanism of our present novels one may dare to say in the teeth of youthful protestants that it is non-existent. The pendulum has swung too far the other way. And as literary artists are rare, the result has not been reassuring. Zola seems prudish after some experiments of the younger crowd. How badly they pull off the trick. How coarse and hard and heavy their touch. Most of these productions read like stupid translations from a dull French original. They are not immoral, only vulgar. As old Flaubert used to say: such books are false, nature is not like that. How keenly he saw through the humbug of "free love" — a romantic tradition of George Sand's epoch — may be noted in his comment that

Emma Bovary found in adultery all the platitudes of marriage. Ah! that much-despised, stupid, venerable institution, marriage! How it has been flouted since the days of Rousseau — the father of false romanticism and that stupefying legend, the "equality" of mankind. (O! the beautiful word, "equality," invented for the delectation of rudimentary minds.) A century and more fiction has played with the theme of concubinage. If the Nacquet divorce bill had been introduced a decade or so before it was in France, what would have become of the theatre of Dumas fils, or later, of the misunderstood woman in Ibsen's plays? All such tribal taboos make or unmake literature.

So, merely as a suggestion to ambitious youngsters, let the novelist of the future in search of a novelty describe a happy marriage, children, a husband who doesn't drink or gamble, a wife who votes, yet loves her home, her family, and knows how to cook. What a realistic bombshell he would hurl into the camp of sentimental socialists and them that believe a wedding certificate is like Balzac's La Peau de Chagrin — a document daily shrinking in happiness. Absurdities make martyrs, but of all the absurd and ineffectual martyrdoms that of running off with another's wife is usually the crowning one. "I don't call this very popular pie," said the little boy in Richard Grant White's story; and the man in the case is usually the first to complain of his bargain in pastry.

However, categories are virtually an avowal of mental impuissance, and all marriages are not made in heaven. In the kingdom of morality there are many mansions. When too late you may sport with the shade — not in the shade — of Amaryllis, and perhaps elbow epigrams as a lean consolation. That is your own affair. Paul Verlaine has told us that "j'ai vécu énormément," though his living enormously did not prove that he was happy: Far from it. But he had at least the courage to relate his terrors. American novelists may agree with Dostoievsky that "everything in the world always ends in meanness"; or with Doctor Pangloss that all is for the best in the best of possible worlds. An affair of temperament. But don't mix the values. Don't confuse intellectual substances. Don't smear a fact with treacle and call it truth. Above all, don't preach. Impiety is an indiscretion, yet, don't be afraid to tell the truth. From Jane Austen and Walter Scott, the parents of the modern English novel, to many modern instances, fiction has thrived best on naked truth. All the rest is sawdust, tripe-selling, and sentimentalism. Didn't Mr. Roundabout declare in one of his famous papers that "Figs are sweet, but fictions are sweeter"? In our land we can't get the latter sweet enough. Altruism, Brotherhood of Man Uplifting. These are the shibboleths of the "nouvelles couches sociales." Prodigious!

III

J.-K. Huysmans declared that in the land of books there are no schools; no idealism, realism, symbolism; only good writers and bad. Whistler said the same about painting and painters. Setting aside the technical viewpoint of such dicta, we fancy that our "best sellers" do not preoccupy themselves with the "mere writing" of their fictions, but they have developed a formidable faculty of preaching. Old-fashioned fiction that discloses personal charm, that delineates manners, or stirs the pulse of tragedy — not melodrama, is vanishing from publishers' lists. Are there not as many charming men and women perambulating the rind of the planet as there were in the days when Jane Austen, or Howells, or Turgenev wrote? We refuse to believe there are not; but there is little opportunity, in a word, no market, for the display of these qualities. The novel with a purpose, generally an unpleasant purpose, has usurped the rule of the novel of character and manners. Boanerges, not Balzac, now occupies the pasteboard pulpit of fiction.

I quoted Henry James to the effect that all life is the province of the novelist. Nevertheless, the still small garden wherein is reared the tender solitary flower does but ill represent the vaster, complicated forest of common hu-

manity. The ivory tower of the cultivated egoist is not to be unduly admired; rather Zola's La Terre with its foul facts than a palace of morbid art. Withal, the didactic side of our fiction is overdone. I set it down to the humbug about the "masses" being opposed to the "classes." Truly a false antithesis. As if the French bourgeois were not a product of the revolution (poor bourgeois, always abused by the novelist). As if a poor man suddenly enriched didn't prove, as a rule, the hardest taskmaster to his own class. Consider the new-rich. What a study they afford the students of manners. A new generation has arisen. Its taste, intelligence, and culture; its canned manners, canned music — preferably pseudo-African — canned art, canned food, canned literature; its devotion to the mediocre — what a field for our aspiring young "secretaries to society."

Cheap prophylactics, political and religious — for religion is fast being butchered to make the sensational evangelists' holiday — are in vogue. They affect our fiction-mongers, who burn to avenge wrongs, write novels about the "downtrodden masses," and sermons on social evils — evils that have always existed, always will exist. Like the knife-grinder, story they have none to tell. Why write fiction, or what they are pleased to call fiction? Why not join the brave brigade of agitators and pamphleteers? The lay preachers are carrying

off the sweepstakes. For them Mr. Howells is a superannuated writer. Would there were more like him in continence of speech, wholesomeness of judgment, nobility of ideals, and in the shrewd perception of character.

Fiction, too, is a fine art, though this patent fact has escaped the juvenile Paul Prys, who are mainly endeavouring to arouse class against mass. It's an old dodge, this equality theory, as old as Beelzebub, Lord of Flies. When all fruit fails, welcome envy and malicious slandering. When you have nothing else to write about, attack your neighbour, especially if he hath a much-coveted vineyard. Max Stirner, least understood of social philosophers, wrote, "Mind your own business," and he forged on the anvil of experience a mighty leading motive for the conduct of life. But our busy little penmen don't see in this golden motto a sufficient sentimental appeal. It doesn't flatter the "masses." Mr. Bryan a few years ago told us that we were all middle class. What is middle class? In Carlyle's day it was a "gigman"; in ours is it the owner of a "flivver"? But in the case of Snob vs. Mob, Snob always wins.

This twaddle about "democratic art" is the bane of our literature. There is only good art. Whether it deals with such "democratic" subjects as L'Assommoir or Germinie Lacerteux, or such "aristocratic" themes as those of D'Annunzio and Paul Bourget, it is the art thereof

that determines the product. I hold no brief for the sterile fiction that is enrolled under the banner of "Art for Art." I go so far as to believe that a novelist with a beautiful style often allows that style to get in the way of human nature. Stained-glass windows have their use, but they falsify the daylight. A decorative style may suit pseudo-mediæval romances, but for twentieth-century realism it is sadly amiss. Nor is the arterio-sclerotic school of psychological analysis to be altogether commended. It has been well-nigh done to death by Stendhal, Meredith, James, and Bourget; and it is as cold as a star. Flaubert urged as an objection to writing a novel, proving something that the other fellow can prove precisely the opposite. In either case selection plays the rôle.

The chief argument against the novel "with a purpose" — as the jargon goes — is its lack of validity either as a document or as art. A novel may be anything, but it must not be polemical. Zola has been, still is, the evil genius of many talented chaps who "sling ink," not to make a genuine book, but to create a sensation. Such writers lack patience, art, and direction. They always keep one eye on the box-office. Indeed, the young men and women of the day, who are squandering upon paper their golden genius, painfully resemble in their productions the dime novels once published by the lamented Beadle or the lucubra-

tions in the Saturday weeklies of long ago. But in those publications there was more virility. The heroes then were not well-dressed namby-pambies; the villains were villainous; the detectives detected real crimes, and were not weavers of metaphysical abstractions like your latter-day miracle-workers of an impossible Scotland Yard; and the girls were girls, neither neurasthenic, nor did they outgolf all creation. The "new" novelists still deal with the same raw material of melodrama. Their handling of love-episodes has much of the blaring-brass quality of old-fashioned Italian opera. They loudly twang the strings of sloppy sentiment, which evoke not music, but mush and moonshine. And these are our "motion-masters" to-day.

IV

There can be no objection to literature and life coming to grips. Letters should touch reality. Many a sturdy blow has been struck at abuses by penmen masquerading behind fiction. No need to summon examples. As for realism — I deny there are commonplace people. Only those writers are commonplace that believe in the phrase. It is one of the paradoxes of art that the commonplace folk of Thackeray, Flaubert, or Anthony Trollope who delight us between covers would in life greatly bore us. The ennui is artistically suggested,

though not experienced by the reader. It is the magic of the novelist, his style and philosophy, that make his creations vital.

Dostoievsky says there are no old women — to be sure he puts the expression in the mouth of the sensualist Karamazov — and as a corollary I maintain that nothing is uninteresting if painted by a master hand, from carrots to Chopin. As for the historical novel, there is Sentimental Education as a model, if you desire something epical in scale and charged with the modern ironic spirit. A Flaubertian masterpiece, this book, with its daylight atmosphere; the inimitable sound, shape, gait, and varied prose rhythms of its sentences, its marvellous gallery of portraits executed in the Dutch manner of Hals and Vermeer, its nearness to its environment, and its fidelity to the pattern of life. It is a true "historical" novel, for it is real — to employ the admirable simile of Mr. Howells.

No need to transpose the tragic gloom of Artzibashef to America; we are an optimistic people, thanks to our air and sky, political conditions, and the immigration of sturdy peasant folk. Yet we, too, have our own peculiar gloom and misery and social problems to solve. We are far from being the "shadowland" of fiction, as a certain English critic said. When I praise the dissonantal art of Michael Artzibashef it is not with the idea that either his style or his pessimism should

be aped. That way unoriginality lies. But I do contend that in the practice of his art, its sincerity, its profundity, he might be profitably patterned after by the younger generation. Art should elevate as well as amuse. Must fiction always be silly and shallow? It need be neither sordid nor didactic.

William James put the matter in a nutshell when he wrote that "the whole atmosphere of present-day Utopian literature tastes mawkish and dish-watery to people who still keep a sense of life's more bitter flavours." And on this fundamentally sound note I must end my little sermon — for I find that I have been practising the very preaching against which I warned embryo novelists. But, then, isn't every critic a lay preacher?

CHAPTER VIII

THE CASE OF PAUL CÉZANNE

THE case of painter Paul Cézanne. Is he a stupendous nobody or a surpassing genius? The critical doctors disagree, an excellent omen for the reputation of the man from Provence. We do not discuss a corpse, and though Cézanne died in 1906 he is still a living issue among artists and writers. Every exhibition calls forth comment: fair, unfair, ignorant, and seldom just. Yet the Cézanne question, is it so difficult to resolve? Like Brahms, the Frenchman is often misrepresented; Brahms, known now as a Romantic writing within the walls of accepted forms, neither a pedant nor a revolutionist; Cézanne, not a revolutionist, not an innovator, vastly interested in certain problems, has been made "chef d'école" and fathered with a lot of theories which would send him into one of his famous rages if he could hear them. Either a revolutionist or a plagiarist! cried Paul Gauguin — whose work was heartily detested by Cézanne; but truth is ever mediocre, whether it resides at the bottom of a well or swings on the cusps of the new moon. What is the truth about Cézanne? The question bobs up every season. His so-called followers

raise a clamour over the banality of "representation" in art, and their master is the one man in the history of art who squandered on canvas startling evocations of actuality, whose nose was closest to the soil. Huysmans was called an "eye" by Remy de Gourmont. Paul Cézanne is also an eye.

In 1901 I saw at the Champs de Mars Salon a picture by Maurice Denis entitled Hommage à Cézanne, the idea of which was manifestly inspired by Manet's Hommage à Fantin-Latour. The canvas depicted a still life by Cézanne on a chevalet and surrounded by Bonnard, Denis, Redon, Roussel, Serusier, Vuillard, Mellerio, and Vollard. Himself (as they say in Irish) is shown standing and apparently unhappy, embarrassed. Then came the brusque apotheosis of 1904 at the Autumn Salon, the most revelatory of his unique gift thus far made. Puvis de Chavannes had a special Salle, so had Eugène Carrière; Cézanne held the place of honour. The critical press was hostile or half-hearted. Poor Cézanne, with his naïve vanity, seemed dazzled by the uproarious championship of "les jeunes," and, to give him credit for a peasant-like astuteness, he was rather suspicious and always on his guard. He stolidly accepted the frantic homage of the youngsters, looking all the while like a bourgeois Buddha. In *The Sun* of 1901, 1904, and 1906 (the latter the year of his death) appeared my articles on Cézanne, among the

first, if not the first, that were printed in this country. Since then he has been hoisted to the stars by his admirers, and with him have mounted his prices. Why not? When juxtaposed with most painters his pictures make the others look like linoleum or papier-mâché.

He did not occupy himself, as did Manet, with the manners, ideas, and aspects of his generation. In the classic retort of Manet he could have replied to those who taunted him with not "finishing" his pictures: "Sir, I am not a historical painter." Nor need we be disconcerted, in any estimate of him, by the depressing snobbery of collectors who don't know B from a bull's foot, but who go off at half-trigger when a hint is dropped about the possibilities of a painter appreciating in a pecuniary sense. Cézanne is the painting idol of the hour, as were Manet and Monet a decade ago. These fluctuations must not distract us, because Cabanel, Bouguereau and Henner, too, were idolised once upon a time, and served to make a millionaire's holiday by hanging in his marble bathroom. It is the undeniable truth that Cézanne has become a tower of strength in the eyes of the younger generation of artists which intrigues critical fancy. Sincerity is strength; Cézanne is sincere to the core; but even stark sincerity does not necessarily imply the putting forth of masterpieces. Before he attained his original, synthetic power he patiently studied Delacroix, Courbet, and

several others. He achieved at times the foundational structure of Courbet, but his pictures, so say his enemies, are sans composition, sans linear pattern, sans personal charm. But "Popularity is for dolls," cried Emerson.

Cézanne's was a twilight soul. And a humourless one. His early modelling in paint was quasi-structural. Always the architectural sense, though his rhythms are elliptical at times and he betrays a predilection for the asymmetrical. Nevertheless, a man who has given to an art in two dimensions the illusion of a third; tactile values are here raised to the *n*th degree. His colour is personal and rhythmic. Huysmans was clairvoyant when, nearly a half-century ago, he spoke of Cézanne's work as containing the prodromes of a new art. He was absorbed in the handling of his material, not in the lyric, dramatic, anecdotic, or rhetorical elements. His portraits are vital and charged with character. And he often thinks profoundly on unimportant matters.

When you are young your foreground is huddled: it is the desire for more space that begets revolutionists; not unlike a big man elbowing his way in a crowd. Laudable then are all these sporadic outbursts; and while a creative talent may remain provincial, even parochial, as was the case with Cézanne, a critic must be cosmopolitan or nothing. An artist may stay rooted in his own bailiwick his life long, yet paint like an angel; but a provincial critic is

a contradiction in terms. He reminds one of a razor so dull that it can't cut butter. Let us therefore be hospitable to new ideas; even Cabanel has his good points.

The tang of the town is not in Cézanne's portraits of places. His leaden landscapes do not arouse to spontaneous activity a jaded retina fed on Fortuny, Monticelli, or Monet. As for the groups of bathing women, how they must wound the sensibility of George Moore, Professor of Energy at the University of Erotica. There is no sex appeal. Merely women in their natural pelt. It is related of the Empress Eugénie that in front of Courbet's Les Baigneuses (Salon, 1853) she asked: "Est-ce aussi une percheronne?" Of the heavy-flanked Percheron breed of horse are the ladies on the canvases of Cézanne. The remark of the Empress appealed to the truculent vanity of Courbet. It might not have pleased Cézanne. With beauty, academic or operatic, he had no traffic. If you don't care for his graceless nudes you may console yourself that there is no disputing tastes — with the tasteless. They are uglier than the females of Degas, and twice as truthful.

We have seen some of his still-life pieces so acid in tonal quality as to suggest that divine dissonance produced on the palate by a slightly stale oyster, or akin to the rancid note of an oboe in a score by Stravinski. But what thrice-subtle sonorities, what colour chords are in his

best work. I once wrote in the Promenades of an Impressionist that his fruits and vegetables savour of the earth. Chardin interprets still-life with realistic beauty; when he painted an onion it revealed a certain grace. Vollon would have dramatised it. When Cézanne painted one you smelt it. A feeble witticism, to be sure, but it registered the reaction on the sounding-board of my sensibility.

The supreme technical qualities in Cézanne are volume, ponderability, and an entrancing colour scheme. What's the use of asking whether he is a "sound" draughtsman? He is a master of edges and a magician of tonalities. Huysmans spoke of his defective eyesight; but disease boasts its discoveries, as well as health. The abnormal vision of Cézanne gave him glimpses of a "reality" denied to other painters. He advised Emile Bernard to look for the contrasts and correspondences of tones. He practised what he preached. No painter was so little affected by personal moods, by those variations of temperament dear to the artist. Had Cézanne the "temperament" that he was always talking about? If so it was not decorative in the accepted sense. An unwearying experimenter, he seldom "finished" a picture. His morose landscapes were usually painted from one scene near his home at Aix. I visited the spot. The pictures do not resemble it; which simply means that Cézanne had the vision and I had not. A few themes with poly-

phonic variations filled his simple life. Art submerged by the apparatus. And he had the centripetal, not the centrifugal temperament.

In his rigid, intense ignorance there was no room for climate, personal charm, not even for sunshine. Think of the blazing blue sky and sun of Provence; the romantic, semitropical riot of its vegetation, its gamuts of green and scarlet, and search for this mellow richness and misty golden air in the pictures of our master. You won't find them, though a mystic light permeates the entire series. The sallow-sublime. He did not paint portraits of Provence, as did Daudet in Numa Roumestan, or Bizet in L'Arlésienne. He sought for profounder meanings. The superficial, the facile, the staccato, and the brilliant repelled him. Not that he was an "abstract" painter — as the jargon goes. He was eminently concrete. He plays a legitimate trompe-l'œil on the optic nerve. His is not a pictorial illustration of Provence, but the slow, patient delineation by a geologist of art of a certain hill on old Mother Earth, shamelessly exposing her bare torso, bald rocky pate, and gravelled feet. The illusion is not to be escaped. As drab as the orchestration of Brahms, and as austere in linear economy; and as analytical as Stendhal or Ibsen, Cézanne never becomes truly lyrical except in his still-life. Upon an apple he lavishes his palette of smothered jewels. And, as all things are relative, an onion for him is as beautiful as a naked woman.

And he possesses a positive genius for the tasteless.

The chiefest misconception of Cézanne is that of the theoretical fanatics who not only proclaim him their chief of school, which may be true, but also declare him to be the greatest painter that ever wielded a brush since the Byzantines. The nervous, shrinking man I saw at Paris would have been astounded at some of the things printed since his death; while he yearned for the publicity of the official Salon (as did Zola for a seat in the Academy) he disliked notoriety. He loved work; above all, solitude. He took with him a fresh batch of canvases every morning and trudged to his pet landscapes, the Motive he called it, and it was there that he slaved away with technical heroism, though he didn't kill himself with his labours as some of his fervent disciples have asserted. He died of unromantic diabetes. When I first saw him he was a queer, sardonic old gentleman in ill-fitting clothes, with the shrewd, suspicious gaze of a provincial notary, A rare impersonality, I should say.

There is a lot of inutile talk about "significant form" by propagandists of the New Æsthetic. As if form had not always been significant. No one can deny Cézanne's preoccupation with form; nor Courbet's either. Consider the Ornans landscapes, with their sombre flux of forest, by the crassest realist among French painters (he seems hopelessly

romantic to our sharper and more petulant modern mode of envisaging the world); there is "significant form," and a solid structural sense. But Cézanne quite o'ercrows Courbet in his feeling for the massive. Sometimes you can't see the ribs because of the skeleton.

Goethe has told us that because of his limitations we may recognise a master. The limitations of Paul Cézanne are patent to all. He is a profound investigator, and if he did not deem it wise to stray far from the territory he called his own then we should not complain, for therein he was monarch of all he surveyed. His non-conformism defines his genius. Imagine reversing musical history and finding Johann Sebastian Bach following Richard Strauss! The idea seems monstrous. Yet this, figuratively speaking, constitutes the case of Cézanne. He arrived after the classic, romantic, impressionistic, symbolic schools. He is a primitive, not made, like Puvis, but one born to a crabbed simplicity. His veiled, cool harmonies sometimes recall the throb of a deep-bass organ-pipe. Oppositional splendour is there, and the stained radiance of a Bachian chorale. The music flows as if from a secret spring.

What poet asked: "When we drive out from the cloud of steam majestical white horses, are we greater than the first men, who led black ones by the mane?" Why can't we be truly catholic in our taste? The heaven of art contains many mansions, and the rainbow more

colours than one. Paul Cézanne will be remembered as a painter who respected his material, and as a painter, pure and complex. No man who wields a brush need wish a more enduring epitaph.

CHAPTER IX

BRAHMSODY

AFTER Wagner the deluge? No, Johannes Brahms. Wagner, the high priest of the music-drama; a great scene-painter in tones. Brahms, a wrestler with the Dwellers on the Threshold of the Infinite; a musical philosopher, but ever a poet. "Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms," cried Von Bülow; but he forgot Schumann. The molten tide of passion and extravagance that swept over intellectual Europe threescore years ago bore on its foaming crest Robert Schumann. He was first cousin to the prince of romancists, Heinrich Heine; Heine, who dipped his pen in honey and gall and sneered and wept in the same couplet. In the tangled, rich underwood of Schumann the young Brahms wandered. There he heard the moon sing silvery, and the leaves rustle rhythms to the heart-beats of lovers. All German romance, fantasy, passion was in Schumann, the Schumann of the Papillons and the Carneval. Brahms walked as did Dante, with the Shades. Bach guided his footsteps; Beethoven bade him glance aloft at the stars. And Brahms had for his legacy polyphony, form, and masterful harmonies. In his music the formulist

finds perfect things. Structurally he is as great as Beethoven, perhaps greater. His architectonic is superb. His melodic content is his own as he strides in stately pomp in the fugued Alexandrines of Bach. Brahms and Browning. Brahms and Freedom. Brahms and Now.

The romantic infant of 1832 died of intellectual anæmia, leaving the world as a legacy one of the most marvellous groupings of genius since Athens's sky carolled azure glances to Pericles. Then came the revolution of 1848, and later a race of sewermen sprang up from the mud. Flaubert, his face turned to the past, his feet to the future, gazed sorrowfully at Carthage and wrote an epic of the bourgeois. Zola and his gang delved into moral cesspools, and the world grew aweary of the malodor. Chopin and Schumann, faint, fading flowers of romanticism, were put in albums where their purple harmonies and subtle sayings are pressed into sweet twilight forgetfulness. Even Berlioz, whose orchestral ozone revivified the scores of Wagner and Liszt; even mad Hector, with the flaming locks, sounded garishly empty, brilliantly superficial. The New Man had arrived. A short, stocky youth played his sonata in C, his Opus I, for Liszt, and the Magyar of Weimar returned the compliment by singing in archangelic tones his own fantasy in B minor, which he fondly and futilely believed a sonata. Brahms fell asleep, and Liszt was enraged. But how symbolical of Brahms to

fall asleep at the very onset of his career, fall asleep before Liszt's music. It is the new wearied of the old, the young fatigued by the garrulities of age. It is sad. It is wonderful. Brahms is of to-day. He is the scientist turned philosopher, the philosopher turned musician. If he were not a great composer he would be a great biologist, a great metaphysician. There are passages in his music in which I detect the philosopher in omphalic meditation.

Brahms dreams of pure white staircases that scale the Infinite. A dazzling, dry light floods his mind, and you hear the rustling of wings — wings of great, terrifying monsters; hippogrifs of horrid mien; hieroglyphic faces, faces with stony stare, menace your imagination. He can bring down within the compass of the octave moods that are outside the pale of mortals. He is a magician, spectral at times, yet his songs have the homely lyric fervour and concision of Robert Burns. A groper after the untoward, shudders at certain bars in his F sharp minor sonata and weeps with the moonlit tranquillity in the slow movement of the F minor sonata. He is often dull, muddy-pated, obscure, and maddeningly slow. Then a rift of lovely music wells out of the mist; you are enchanted and cry: "Brahms, master, anoint again with thy precious melodic chrism our thirsty eyelids!"

Brahms is an inexorable formulist. His four symphonies, his three piano sonatas, the

choral works and chamber music — are they not all living testimony to his admirable management of masses? He is not a great colourist. For him the pigments of Makart, Wagner, and Théophile Gautier are as naught. Like Puvis de Chavannes, he is a Primitive. Simple, flat tints, primary and cool, are superimposed upon rhythmic versatility and strenuousness of thought. Ideas, noble, profundity-embracing ideas he has. He says great things in a great manner, but it is not the smart, epigrammatic, scarlet, flashing style of your little man. He disdains racial allusions. He is German, but a planetary Teuton. You seek in vain for the geographical hints, hintings that chain Grieg to the map of Norway. Brahms's melodies are world-typical, not cabined and confined to his native Hamburg. This largeness of utterance, lack of polish, and a disregard for the politesse of his art do not endear him to the unthinking. Yet, what a master miniaturist he is in his little piano pieces, his Intermezzi. There he catches the tender sigh of childhood or the intimate flutterings of the heart stirred by desire. Feminine he is as no woman composer; and virile as are few men. The sinister fury, the mocking, drastic fury of his first rhapsodies — true soul-tragedies — how they unearthed the core of pessimism in our age. Pessimist? Yes, but yet believer; a believer in himself, thus a believer in men and women.

He reminds me more of Browning than does

Schumann. The full-pulsed humanity, the dramatic — yes, Brahms is dramatic, not theatric — modes of analysis, the flow, glow, and relentless tracking to their ultimate lair of motives is Browning; but the composer never loses his grip on the actualities of structure. After Chopin, Brahms? He gives us a cooling, deep draught in exchange for the sugared wormwood, the sweet, exasperated poison of the Polish charmer. A great sea is his music, and it sings about the base of that mighty mount we call Beethoven. Brahms takes us to subterrane depths; Beethoven is for the heights. Strong lungs are needed for the company of both giants.

Brahms, the surgeon whose scalpel pierces the aches of modern soul-maladies. Bard and healer. Beethoven and Brahms.

CHAPTER X

THE OPINIONS OF J.-K. HUYSMANS

A MONUMENT should be erected to the memory of the inventor of playing-cards because he did something toward suppressing the free exchange of human imbecility! The Frenchman Huysmans, who wrote this charming sentiment, was not necessarily companionable. He was the most unpleasant among the world's great writers; for as a great master of prose he ranks high in the literature of his country. His detestation of the mediocre became a tormenting fixed idea. Like Flaubert, a neurotic, his digestive organs in a dyspeptic condition, Huysmans pursued the disagreeable with the ardour of a sportsman tracking game. Why precisely such subjects appealed to him must be left to the truffle-hunters of degeneration. Swift is in the same class, but Swift enjoyed scarifying his Yahoos. Huysmans did not. Nor for that matter did Flaubert. The De Goncourts have told us in their copious confidences the agony they endured when digging for documents. Germinie Lacerteux was painful travail, not alone because of the tortuous style it demanded, but also because of the author's natural repugnance to such vulgar

material. They were aristocrats. Huysmans came of a solid bourgeois family; Dutch on the paternal side, his father hailed from Breda, and Parisian on the distaff. Therefore he might have described his modest surroundings with less acerbity than the irritable De Goncourts. Such was not the case. He loathed his themes. He was unhappy while developing them. Perhaps the clairvoyance of hatred, which may be a powerful incentive, forced his pen to the task. But the fact remains that, art and religion aside, Huysmans did not love what he transposed from life to his marvellously written pages. His was a veritable Æsthetic of the Ugly and Hateful. Yet he possessed a nature sensitive to the pathological point. And, like Schopenhauer, he masked this undue sensibility with a repelling misanthrophy.

In a study of him by his disciple, Gustave Coquiot, Le Vrai J.-K. Huysmans, with an etched portrait by Raffaelli, we are shown some intimate characteristics. Huysmans never beat about the social ambush, but freely expressed his opinions concerning contemporaries; indeed, a phrase of the Goncourts might have been his, "Je vomis mes contemporains." He has been called an "exasperated Goncourt," which is putting it mildly. However, it must not be supposed that he was a roaring egoist, hitting out blindly. He seems, according to the account of Coquiot and Remy de Gourmont, to have been an unassuming and indus-

trious functionary in the Ministry of the Interior, and even when aroused not so truculent as sarcastic. The Dutch and Flemish base to his temperament endowed him with considerable phlegm; he was never demonstrative, disliked effusiveness in life and literature, and only in his ironical speech lurked the distilled bitterness of his prejudices. He had many. Yet, fearful of a literary career, with its poverty and disillusionments, he endured the ennui and fatigues of thirty-two years of office work, and, a model clerk, he was decorated when he left his bureau in the Ministry. That is, decorated for his zeal and punctuality, not for his books. Numberless are the jokes made about the Legion of Honour, yet none contain such subacid irony as this one. Huysmans the irascible among decorated philistines!

"Perhaps it is only a stupid book that some one has mentioned, or a stupid woman; as he speaks the book looms up before one, becomes monstrous in its dulness, a masterpiece and a miracle of imbecility; the unimportant little woman grows into a slow horror before your eyes. It is always the unpleasant aspect of things that he seizes, but the intensity of his revolt from that unpleasantness brings a touch of the sublime into the very expression of his disgust. Every sentence is an epigram, and every epigram slaughters a reputation or an idea. He speaks with an accent as of pained surprise, and amused look of contempt, so pro-

found that it becomes almost pity, for human imbecility." This tiny etched portrait is by Mr. Arthur Symons, who practically introduced Huysmans to English-speaking letters.

Pitiless he was, as pitiless to himself as to others. Yet Coquiot found him entertaining betimes, while De Gourmont scoffs at his tales of stomachic woe. Huysmans, he says, ate heartily in the very restaurants he so viciously abuses throughout that Iliad of indigestion, A Vau-l'Eau. He was the M. Folantin, the unheroic hero; as he was the unpatriotic hero of The Knapsack — published in Zola's collection, Les Soirées de Medan. In all his books he figures. Jules Lemaître describes them collectively as: a young man with the dysentery; a young man who disliked single blessedness — the critic used a stronger expression; a man who couldn't get a beefsteak in Paris cooked as he wanted it, and a man who liked to read the chaste chronicle of Gilles de Rais, otherwise known as the sadistic Bluebeard — these comprise the characters of Huysmans. After his conversion he made amends, though he was always the atrabilious faultfinder.

No matter. One of the most notable of art critics in a city abundantly supplied with criticism was this same Huysmans. His critical achievement may outlive his fiction and his religious confessions. He preferred Certains to his other books. It is written in his most astounding and captivating style. The por-

traits of certain artists in this unique volume recite the history of the critic's acuity and clairvoyance. He first announced Edgar Degas as the "greatest artist we possess to-day in France." He discovered Odilon Redon, Raffaelli, Forain, and wrote of Gustave Moreau in enamelled prose. Whistler, Chéret, Pissarro, Gauguin were praised by him before they had attracted the pontifical disdain of academic criticism. To Rops he consecrated some extraordinary pages, for Huysmans was a verbal virtuoso superior to any of the artists he praised and later he cynically confessed to Coquiot that he didn't highly estimate the Belgian etcher, but found in him excellent pasture for his own picture-making pen. In a word, the erotic Rops attracted him more than Rops the every-day craftsman, and rightly enough. With the Japanese this erotic side of Rops is only for the connoisseur.

Huysmans said some just things of Whistler, and he was the first critic to salute the rising star of Paul Cézanne, who, he asserts, contributed more to the impressionist movement than Manet; and one who also discovered the prodromes of a new art. (This was as early as 1877.) He found the Cézanne still-life brutally real; above all, a preoccupation with forms and "edges," that betrayed this painter's tendency toward a novel synthesis. But according to Coquiot, Huysmans saw through the hole in the Cézanne millstone. The Pro-

vençal was a rusé, an intrigant, and a money-grubber in his old age, and proved his plebeian ancestry. His father began barber, ended banker, shaved faces as well as notes, bled his clientèle in both professions.

American collectors of art Huysmans treated as brigands. In the matter of the classical painters and sculptors he manifested himself intransigent. He adored the Flemish primitives, the School of Cologne and a few of the Italian primitives, but with the exception of Fra Angelico found their types detestingly androgynous. (He employed a more pungent term.) In the Low Countries are the true primitives, he declared, as the only mysticism is that of John of the Cross and Saint Teresa. Matthias Grünewald's Crucifixion is his idol. Huysman's opinion of Puvis de Chavannes in Certains is stimulating though inconclusive. For him Puvis tries to dance a rigaudon at a Requiem mass! But as a descendant of Cornelis Huysmans, the Parisian sees with almost an abnormal vision, and in prose paints like a veritable Fleming. Little wonder De Gourmont called him an "eye." His prose is addressed to the eye, rather than to the ear. Sumptuous in colouring, its rhythmic movement is pompous, its tone hieratic; and he so manipulated it that it was a perfect medium to depict the Paris of his time.

Huysmans did not think too highly of his brothers under the same literary yoke. His

opinions are concise. Coquiot prints them. Despite his affiliations with Zola and the naturalistic group, Huysmans soon tired of his chief, tired of his theories, his crude notions of art and life. He definitely broke away from him in his famous preface to Là Bas. And it should not be forgotten that he was the first to celebrate in fiction, if celebration it may be called, the prostitute of modern Paris. Marthe appeared a year earlier than either Nana or La Fille Elise, the latter by Edmond de Goncourt. But he sickened of the sewer fiction only to dive deeper in the mediæval vileness of Là Bas. He met Goncourt through the offices of Léon Cladel, a writer little known to our generation. Huysmans was a friend in need to Villiers de l'Isle Adam, and frequented the eccentric company of Barbey d'Aurevilly, in whose apartment he said that Paul Bourget was apt to pop out of a closet or a cloak. He did not care for that "Cherubin of the Duchesses of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine."

Of Corneille, Racine, Molière, Dante, Schiller, and Goethe he spoke with ill-concealed contempt. Raseurs, all these "solemn pontiffs." His major detestation was Voltaire. Balzac, the prodigious novelist, left him unstirred. "Not an artistic epithet" in his edition, fifty volumes long, and not a novelist easy to reread. Théophile Gautier did not attract him; he found the impeccable master cold and diluted; so many pages published to say nothing! Huys-

by the Crépets (Eugène and Jacques) there is the genesis of the story. To become better acquainted with English speech and manners, Baudelaire frequented an English tavern in the Rue de Rivoli, where he drank whisky, read *Punch*, and also sought the company of English grooms in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Huysmans loved Baudelaire as much as Brunetière detested him. There is no doubt he knew this thoroughly Baudelairian anecdote. A perverse comet in the firmament of French literature, Joris-Karl Huysmans will always be more admired than loved.

CHAPTER XI

STYLE AND RHYTHM IN ENGLISH PROSE

I

STYLISTS in prose are privileged persons. They may write nonsense and escape the castigation of prudish pedants; or, dealing with cryptic subjects, they can win the favour of the unthinking; witness, in the brain-carpentry of metaphysics, say, the verbal manœuvres of three such lucid though disparate thinkers as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and William James. The names of these three writers are adduced as evidence that it is not necessary to be foggy of style even when dealing with abstract ideas. And Germany has long been the Nibelheim of philosophy; need we mention Hegel, whose commentators have made his meanings thrice-confounded? Style in literature is an antiseptic. It may embalm foolish flies in its amber, and it is a brevet of immortality — that is, as immortality goes; a brief thing, but a man's boast. When the shoeblack part of the affair is over and done with, the grammar, which was made for schoolmarms in male garb, and the shining rhetoric, what remains? The answer is eternal: Style cannot be taught. A good style is direct, plain, and simple. The writer's

keyboard is that humble camel the dictionary. Style, being concerned with the process of movement, has nothing to do with results, says one authority. And an impertinent collusion on the part of the writer with his own individuality does not always constitute style; for individual opinion is virtually private opinion, notwithstanding its appearance in editions half a hundred long; Sainte-Beuve and De Quincey here occur to the memory. Men change; mankind never.

Too close imitation of the masters has its dangers for the novice. Apes and peacocks beset the way. Stevenson's prose style is highly synthesised and a mosaic of dead men's manner. He has no esoteric message beyond the expression of his sprite-like, whimsical personality, and this expression is, in the main, consummate. The lion in his pathway is the thinness of his intellectual processes; as in De Quincey's case, a master of the English language beyond compare, who in the region of pure speculation often goes sadly limping; his criticism of Kant proves it. But a music-maker in our written speech, Robert Louis Stevenson is the supreme mocking-bird in English literature. He overplayed the sedulous imitator. John Jay Chapman in a brilliant essay has traced the progress of this prose pilgrim, a professional stylist as well as a professional invalid. The American critic registers the variations in style and sensibility of the

Scotsman, who did not always demonstrate in his writing the fundamental idea that the sole exponent of sensibility is analytic power. He drew freely on all his predecessors, and his personal charm exhibits the "glue of unanimity," as old Boëthius would say. Mr. Chapman quotes a passage supposedly from Sir Thomas Browne, beginning, "Time sadly overcometh all things," which is not to be found in his collected writings. Yet it is apropos because, like Stevenson's prose, it is from the crucible of an alchemist, though at the time Mr. Chapman quoted it was not known to be a clever Liverpudlian forgery. Since then, after considerable controversy, the paragraph in question has been shown as the fabrication of a Liverpool man of letters, whose name we have forgotten. But it suggests, does this false Browne, that good prose may be successfully simulated, though essentials be missing.

If style cannot be imparted, what, then, is the next best thing to do, after a close study of the masters? We should say, go in a chastened mood to the nearest newspaper office and apply for a humble position on its staff. Then one will come to grips with life, the pacemaker of style. There is a lot of pompous advice emitted by the college professor — the Eternal Sophomore — about fleeing "journalese"; whereas it is in the daily press, whether New York, Paris, Vienna, or London, that one may find the soundest, most succinct prose,

prose stripped of superfluous ornament, prose bare to the bone, and in fighting trim. But not elevated prose, "numerous" prose, as Quintilian hath it. For the supreme harmony of English prose we must go to the Bible (the Authorised, not the Revised, the latter manufactured by "the persons called revisers," as George Saintsbury bluntly describes them); to Shakespeare, Jeremy Taylor, Sir Thomas Browne, Walter Raleigh, Milton, De Quincey, Ruskin, Swinburne, Cardinal Newman, Pater, and Arthur Symons. And not forgetting the sweet intimacy of Charles Lamb, the sly charm of Max Beerbohm, or the harmonious and imaginative prose of W. H. Hudson, whose Green Mansions recalls the Châteaubriand of Atala, without its hateful note of morbid egotism.

Nor are the exponents of the grand manner, of an ornate style, to be patterned after. If elevation of theme is not present, then the peril of "fine writing" is scarcely to be avoided. Better follow such writers as Bacon, Bunyan, Hobbes, Swift in preference. Or the Augustan group, Dryden, Addison, Shaftesbury, and Temple. But Doctor Johnson, Burke and Gibbon are not models for the beginner, any more than the orotund prose of Bossuet, the musical utterance of Châteaubriand, or the dramatic prose of Hugo are safe models for French students. The rich continence of Flaubert, the stippled concision of Mérimée or the dry-sherry

wit of Voltaire are surer guides. And the urbane ease and flowing rhythms of Thackeray are preferable to the baphometic verbal baptisms of Carlyle the Boanerges.

Yet what sweet temptations are to be found in the golden age of English prose, beginning with the evocation of Sir Walter Raleigh, "O eloquent, just, and mighty death; whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded"; surely not far beneath the magnificent prose of the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah in the Authorised, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen unto thee," which is so mighty in rhythm that even those "dolefullest of creatures . . . utterly ignorant of English literature, the Revisers of 1870–85, hardly dared to touch at all," blandly remarks Professor Saintsbury. And to balance the famous "Now since these dead bones" of Sir Thomas, there is the tender coda to Sir William Temple's Use of Poetry and Music, "When all is done, human life is at the greatest and best." Those long, sweeping phrases, drumming with melody and cadences, like the humming of slow, uplifting walls of water tumbling on sullen strands, composed by the masters of that "other harmony of prose," are not mere "purple panels" but music made by immortals. (And I am convinced that if R. L. S. were alive and condemned to read this last sentence of mine, with its monotonous "run" of M's, he would condemn it.) Consider Milton and

his majestic evocation: "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation arousing herself, . . . an eagle mewing her mighty youth . . ." and then fall down and worship, for we are in the holy of holies. Stevenson preferred the passage, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue," and who shall gainsay him? And Stevenson has written a most inspiring study of the Technical Elements of Style in Literature, to be found in the Biographical Edition. In it he calls the Macaulay "an incomparable dauber" for running the letter "k" through a paragraph, and in it he sets forth in his chastened and classic style the ineluctable (Henry James revived this pretty word) perils of prose. Also its fascinations. "The prose writer," he says, "must keep his phrases large, rhythmical, comely, without letting them fall into the strictly metrical; harmonious in diversity, musical in the mouth, in texture woven into committed phrases and rounded periods." The stylist may vault airily into the saddle of logic, or in the delicate reticulation of his silver-fire paragraphs he may take, as an exemplar, John Henry Newman.

Stevenson is a perfectionist, and that way lies madness for all save a few valiant spirits. Sir Walter Raleigh, formerly Professor Raleigh, has written a crystal-clear study on Style, an essay of moment because in the writing thereof he preaches what he practises. He confesses that "inanity dogs the footsteps of the classic

tradition," and that "words must change to live, and a word once fixed becomes useless. . . . This is the error of the classical creed, to imagine that in a fleeting world, where the quickest eye can never see the same thing twice, and a deed once done can never be repeated, language alone should be capable of fixity and finality." The Flaubertian crux. Nevertheless, Flaubert could write of style in a fluid, impressionistic way: "A style . . . which will be as rhythmic as verse, as precise as the language of science, which will have undulations, modulations, like those of a violoncello, flashes of fire. A style which would enter into the idea like the stroke of a stiletto, . . . all the combinations of prosody have been made, those of prose are still to make." Flaubert was not obsessed by the "unique word," but by a style which is merged in the idea; as the melodic and harmonic phrases of Richard Wagner were born simultaneously and clothed in the appropriate orchestral colours. Perhaps the cadenced prose of Pater, with its multiple resonance and languorous rhythms, may be a sort of sublimated chess-game, as Saintsbury more than hints; yet, what a fair field for his carved ivory pieces. His undulating and iridescent periods are like the solemn sound of organ music accompanied from afar by a symphony of flutes, peacocks, and promegranates.

No wonder Stevenson pronounces French prose a finer art than English, though admitting

that in the richer, denser harmonies of English its native writers find at first hand the very quality so eagerly sought for by Flaubert. French is a logical language, one of distinction and clarity, and one in which metre never intrudes, but it lacks the overtones of our mother speech. The English shares in common with the Russian the art of awakening feelings and thoughts by the resonance of words, which seem to be written not in length but in depth, and then are lost in faint reverberations.

But artistic prose, chiselled prose, is a negligible quantity nowadays. It was all very well in the more spacious times of linkboys, sedan-chairs, and bag-wigs, but with the typist cutting one's phrases into angular fragments, with the soil at our heels saturated in slang, what hope is there for assonance, variety in rhythm, and the sonorous cadences of prose? Write "naturally," we are told. Properly speaking, there is no such thing as a "natural style." Even Newman, master of the pellucid, effortless phrase, confesses to laborious days of correction, and he wrote with the idea uppermost and with no thought of style, so-called. Abraham Lincoln nourished his lonely soul on the Bible and Bunyan. He is a writer of simple yet elevated prose, without parallel in our native literature other than Emerson. Hawthorne and Poe wrote in the key of classic prose; while Walt Whitman's jigsaw jingle is the ultimate deliquescence of prose form. For

practical every-day needs the eighteenth-century prose men are the best to follow. But the Bible is the Golden Book of English prose.

Quintilian wrote: "We cannot even speak except in longs and shorts, and longs and shorts are the material of feet." All personal prose should go to a tune of its own. The curious are recommended to the monumental work of George Saintsbury, A History of English Prose Rhythm. Prose may be anything else, but it must not be bad blank verse. "Numerous" as to rhythms, but with no hint of balance, in the metrical sense; without rhythm it is not prose at all. Professor Oliver Elton has set this forth with admirable lucidity in his English Prose Numbers. He also analyses a page from The Golden Bowl of Henry James, discovering new beauties of phrasing and subtle cadences in the prose of this writer. Professor Saintsbury's study is the authoritative one among its fellows. Walter Pater's essay on Style is honeycombed with involutions and preciosity. When On the Art of Writing, by Arthur Quiller-Couch, appeared we followed Hazlitt's advice and reread an old book, English Composition, by Professor Barrett Wendell, and with more pleasure and profit than followed the later perusal of the Cornish novelist's lectures.

He warns against jargon. But the seven arts, science, society, medicine, politics, religion, have each their jargon. Not music-

criticism, not baseball, are so painfully "jargonised" as metaphysics. Jargon is the fly in the ointment of every critic. Even the worthy fellow of Jesus College, Sir Arthur himself, does not altogether escape it. On page 233 of his Inaugural Address he speaks of "[illegible] discinct talk." "Discinct" is good, but "ungirded" is better because it is not obsolete, and it is more sonorous and Saxon. On page 42 we stumble against "suppeditate" and gnash our teeth. After finishing the book the timid neophyte will be apt to lay the flattering unction to his soul that he is a born stylist, like the surprised Mr. Jourdain, who spoke prose so many years without knowing it.

II

Fancy a tall, imposing man, in the middle years, standing before a music-desk, humming and beating time. His grey, lion-like mane is in disorder; his large eyes, pools of blue light, gleam with excitement. The colour of his face is reddish, the blood mounts easily to his head, a prophetic sign of his death by apoplexy. It is Gustave Flaubert in his study at Croisset, a few miles down the Seine below Rouen. He is chanting a newly composed piece of prose, marking time as if he were conducting a music-drama. "What are you doing there?" asked his friend. "Scanning these

words, because they don't sound well," he replied. Flaubert would spend a day over a sentence and practically tested it by declaiming — pouting, he called it — for as he wisely remarked: "A well-constructed phrase adapts itself to the rhythm of respiration." His delight in prose assonance and cadence manifested itself in his predilection for such a phrase as Châteaubriand's in Atala: "Elle répand dans le bois ce grand secret de mélancholie qu'elle aime à raconter aux vieux chênes et aux rivages antiques des mers." There's a "mouther" for you! as George Saintsbury would say. But in this age of uninflected speech the louder the click of the type-machine the better the style.

If modern prose were written for the ear as well as the eye, chanted and scanned, it might prove more sonorous and rhythmic than it does, and more artistic. Curiously enough, Professor Saintsbury in his magisterial work writes: "I rather doubt myself whether the very finest and most elaborate prose is not better read than heard." That is, it must be overheard by the inner ear, which statement rather puts a damper on Flaubert's contention. What saith the worthy Aristotle? "All things are determined by number." Prose should have rhythm but should not be metrical ("Rhetoric"); which Robert Louis Stevenson thus paraphrased in his Technical Elements of Style in Literature: "The rule of scansion in verse

is to suggest no measure but the one in hand; in prose to suggest no measure at all. Prose must be rhythmical, and it may be as much so as you will; but it must not be metrical. It may be anything, but it must not be verse." (Probably if he had read the amorphous stuff by courtesy named "vers libre" Stevenson would have written a stronger word than "anything.") Or, again, Saintsbury: "The Rhythm of Prose, like the Metre of Verse, can, in English as well as the classical languages, be best expressed by the foot system, or system of mathematical combinations of 'long' and 'short' syllables." A fig for your "ancient trumpery of skeleton scanning," cries Professor William Morrison Patterson in his The Rhythm of Prose: "Amphibrachs, bacchics, antibacchics, antipasts, molossi, dochmiacs, and proceleusmatics, which heretofore have been brandished before our eyes, as if they were anything more than, as stress-patterns, merely half the story."

The Columbia University professor would be far more likely to indorse the axiom of Remy de Gourmont that style is physiological, which Flaubert well knew. And now, having deployed my heaviest artillery of quotation, let me begin by saying that Professor Patterson's study is a remarkable contribution to the critical literature of a much-debated theme, Prose Rhythms, and this without minifying the admirable labours of Saintsbury, Shelley, Oliver Elton, Ker, or Professor Bouton of the New

York University. One of the reasons that interest the present writer in the monograph is its strong musical bias. Professor Patterson is evidently the possessor of a highly organised musical ear, even if he be not a practical musician. He no doubt agrees with Disraeli's dictum that the key to literature is music; *i. e.*, number, cadence, rhythm. I recall Miss Dabney's study, The Musica Basis of Verse, dealing as it does with a certain side of the subject. But the Patterson procedure is different. It is less "literary" than psychological, less psychological than physiological. He experiments with the Remy de Gourmont idea, though he probably never saw it in print. "Rhythm," he writes in his preface, "is thus regarded as first of all an experience, established, as a rule, by motor performance of however rudimentary a nature." Here is the man of science at work.

He speaks of the "lost art of rhythm," adduces syncopation so easily mastered by those born "timers," the Indians and Negroes, pertinently remarks that "no two individuals ever react exactly alike. The term 'type' is in many ways a highly misleading fiction." Prose Rhythm, he continues, "must be classed as subjective organisation of irregular, virtually haphazard arrangement of sounds. . . . The ultimate basis of all rhythmic experience, however, is the same. To be clear-cut it must rest upon a series of definite temporal units."

Professor Patterson experimented in two rooms: "one the regular sound-room belonging to the department of psychology at Columbia; the other an expressly constructed, fairly sound-proof cabinet built into one end of an underground room belonging to the department of physics."

It has a slightly sinister ring, all this, has it not? Padded cells and aural finger-prints! — to make an Irish bull. Max Nordau called John Ruskin a Torquemada of Æsthetics. Professor Patterson might be styled a Tonal Torturer. But the experimentings were painless. "The first object," he informs us, "was to find out, as far as possible, how a group of twelve people, ten men and two women, differed with respect to the complex of mental processes usually designated roughly as the 'sense of rhythm.' After they had been ranked according to the nature of their reactions and achievements in various tests, one of the group, who had evinced a measure of ease in rapid tapping, was chosen to make drum-beat records on a phonograph. A sentence from Walter Pater, a sentence from Henry James, a passage of music from Chopin, a haphazard arrangement of words and a haphazard arrangement of musical notes, were tapped upon a small metal drum and the beats recorded by the phonograph. The words were tapped according to the syllables as felt, a tap for each syllable. 'Hours,' for instance, was given two beats.

The notes were tapped according to their designated time-values. Observer No. 1, having had long training as a musician, found no technical difficulty in the task. The remaining eleven observers, without being told the source of the records, heard the five series of drum-beats and passed judgment upon them. The most significant judgment made was that of Observer No. 7, who declared that all five records gave him the impression of regular musical themes. A large number of the observers, especially on the first hearing, found all of the records, including even the passage from Chopin, elusive and more or less irregular. An attempt was then made, by means of accompanying schedules, to find out how much or how little organisation each observer could be brought to feel in the beats corresponding to the passage from Walter Pater and the passage of haphazard musical notes." All the data are carefully set down in the Appendices.

The sentence by Walter Pater was chosen from his essay on Leonardo da Vinci, in The Renaissance. "It is the landscape, not of dreams or of fancy, but of places far withdrawn, and hours selected from a thousand with a miracle of finesse"; subtly rhythmic, too much so for any but trained ears. Some simpler excerpt from Sir Thomas Browne or John Ruskin might have been selected, such as, in the former case, the coda from the Urn Burial, or even that chest-expanding phrase, "To sub-

sist in bones, and to be pyramidally extant is a fallacy in duration." Or, best of all, because of its tremendous intensity, the passage from Saint Paul: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The drum-beat is felt throughout, but the pulsation is not marked as in the pages of Macaulay; nor has it the monotony found in Lohengrin on account of the prevalence of common or four-four time, and also the coincidence of the metrical and rhythmic beat, a coincidence that Chopin usually avoids, and all latter-day composers flee as dulness-breeding. The base-rhythm of English prose is, so Professor Saintsbury writes, "the pæon, or four-syllabled foot," and, he could have added, provocative of ennui for delicate ears. Variety in rhythms is the ideal. Our author appositely quotes from Puffer's Studies in Symmetry: "A picture composed in substitutional symmetry is more rich in its suggestions of motor impulse, and thus more beautiful, than an example of geometrical symmetry." And this applies to prose and music as well as to pictures. It is the very kernel of the art of Paul Cézanne; rhythmic irregularity, syncopation, asymmetry.

De Quincey's Our Lady of Darkness and a sentence from Cardinal Newman's Grammar

of Assent were included among the tests. Also one from Henry James; in the preface to The Golden Bowl: "For I have nowhere found vindicated the queer thesis that the right values of interesting prose depend all on withheld tests." If, according to lovers of the old rhetoric, of the resounding "purple panels" of Bossuet, Châteaubriand, Flaubert, Raleigh, Browne, and Ruskin, the cooler prose of Mr. James cannot be "spouted"; nevertheless, the interior rhythmic life is finer and more complex. The Chopin nocturne played was the familiar one in G minor, Opus 37, No. 1, simple in rhythmic structure though less interesting than its sister nocturne in G, Opus 37, No. 2 (the first is in common, the second in six-eighths time). Professor Patterson knows Riemann and his "agogic accent," which, according to that editor of the Chopin Etudes, is a slight expansion in the value of the note; not a dynamic accent.

In his treatment of vers libre our author is not too sympathetic. He thinks that "in their productions" — free-verse poets — "the disquieting experience of attempting to dance up the side of a mountain" is suggested. "For those who find this task exhilarating vers libre, as a form, is without rival. With regard to subtle cadence, however, which has been claimed as the chief distinction of the new poets, it is still a question as to how far they have surpassed the refinement of balance that quickens the prose of Walter Pater." They have not,

despite the verbal ingenuity, banished the impression of dislocation, of the epileptic. In French, in the hands of Rimbaud, Verlaine, Verhaeren, Gustave Kahn, Régnier, Stuart Merrill, Vielé Griffin, and Jules Laforgue, the rhythms are supple, the assonances grateful to the ear, the irregular patterns not offensive to the eye; in a word, a form, or a deviation from form, more happily adapted to the genius of the French or Italian language than to the English. Most of our native vers libre sounds like a ton of coal falling through too small an aperture in the sidewalk. However, "it's not the gilt that makes a god, but the worshipper."

For musicians and writers the interesting if abstruse study of Professor Patterson will prove valuable. After reading of the results in his laboratory at Columbia we feel that we have been, all of us, talking rhythmic prose our life long.

CHAPTER XII

THE QUEEREST YARN IN THE WORLD

THE way the story leaked out was this: A young Irishman from Sligo, as he blushingly admitted, whose face was a passport of honesty stamped by nature herself, had served two customers over the bar of the old chop-house across the street from the opera-house. To him they were just two throats athirst; nothing more. They ordered drinks, and this first attracted his attention, for they agreed on cognac. Now, brandy after dinner is not an unusual drink, but this pair had asked for a large glass. Old brandy was given them, and such huge swallows followed that the bartender was compelled by his conscience to ring up one dollar for the two drinks. It was paid, and another round commanded, as if the two men were hurried, as indeed they were, for it was during an entr'acte at the opera that they had slipped out for liquid refreshments. Against the bar of the establishment a dozen or more humans were ranged, and the noise was deafening, but not so great as to prevent the Irishman from catching scraps of the conversation dropped by the brandy-drinkers. Their talk went something like this, and, although Michael had little

schooling, his memory was excellent, and, being a decent chap, there is no need to impeach the veracity of his report.

The taller man, neither young, neither old, and, like his friend, without a grey hair, burst out laughing after the disappearance of the second cognac. "I say, old pal, who was it wrote that brandy was for heroes? Kipling? What?" The other man, stockily built, foreign-looking, answered in a contemptuous tone ("sneering-like," as my informant put it):

"Where's your memory? Gone to rack and ruin like your ideals, I suppose! Kipling! What do such youngsters know? Doctor Johnson or Walter Savage Landor was the originator of the lying epigram; after them Byron gobbled it up, as he gobbled up most of the good things of his generation, and after him, the deluge of this mediocre century. When I told Byron this, at Milan, I think it was, he vowed me an ass. Now, it was Doctor Johnson."

"Cheer up, it's not so bad. I remember once at Paris, or was it Vienna, you said the same thing about ——" and here followed a strange name.

"And, anyhow, you are mixing dates; Landor followed Byron, please, but I suppose he said it first. I told Metternich of your bon-mot, and, egad! he laughed, did that old parchment face. As for Bonaparte, upstart and charlatan, he was too selfish to smile at anybody's wit

but his own, and little he had. Do you remember the Congress of Vienna?"

"Do I — 1815?"

"Some such year. Or was it in 1750 when we saw Casanova at Venice? Well —" At this point the alarm-signal went off, and the mob went over to the opera. The young bartender's heart was beating so fast that it "leapt up in his bosom," as he described it. Two middle-aged men talking of a century ago as calmly as if they had spoken of yesterday flustered him a bit. He heard the dates. He noticed the perfectly natural manner in which events were mentioned. There was no mystification. For the first time in his life Michael was sorry the between-act pause was so short, and he longed for the next one, though fatigued from the labours of the last. Would these gentlemen return for more cognac? In an hour they came back with the crowd, again drank old five-star brandy, and gossiped about a lot of incomprehensible things that had evidently taken place in the sixteenth or seventeenth century; at least, Michael overheard them disputing dates, and one of them bet the other that the big fire in London occurred in 1666, and referred the question to Mr. Peppers, or Peps — some such name.

"Ah, poor old Pepys," sighed the dark man; "if he had only taken better care of himself he might have been with us to-day instead of mouldering in his grave."

"Oh, well! you can't expect every one to believe in your Struldbrug cure," replied his friend dreamily. "Even Her Majesty, Queen Anne, would not take your advice, though Mrs. Masham and Mr. Harley begged her to."

"Yes, about the only thing they ever agreed upon in their life. Where is Harley to-day?"

"Oh, I suppose in London," carelessly replied the other. "For a young bird of several centuries he's looking as fit as a fiddle; but see here, Swift, old boy, your bogy-tales are worrying our young friend," and with that Michael says they pointed to him, heartily laughed, and went away.

He crossed himself, and for a moment the electric lights burned dim, so it seemed to the superstitious laddie-buck. But he had had a good chance to study the odd pair. They were not, as he repeated, old men, neither were they youthful. Say thirty-five or forty years, and he noticed this time the freshness of their complexions, the brilliancy of their eyes. They were just gentlemen in evening clothes and had run across Broadway without overcoats, a reprehensible act even for a young man. But they were healthy, self-contained, and hard-headed — they took, according to the statistician behind the bar, about a quart of brandy between them, and were as fresh as daisies after the fiery stuff. Who were they? "Blagueurs," said I, after I had carefully deciphered the runic inscriptions in Michael's mind.

(This was a week later.) Two fellows out on a lark, bent on scaring a poor Irish boy. But what was Swift, or Queen Anne, or Metternich, or Mr. Harley to him? Just words. Bonaparte he might be expected to remember. It was curious all the same that he could reel off the unusual names of Mrs. Masham and Casanova. The deuce! was there something in the horrid tale? Two immortals stalking the globe when their very bones should have been dissolved into everlasting dust! Two wraiths revisiting the glimpses of the moon — hold on! Struldbrug! Who was Struldbrug? What his cure? I tried to summon from the vasty deep all the worthies of the eighteenth century. Struldbrug. Swift. Struldbrug. Sir William Temple. Struldbrug — ah! by the great horn spoon! The Struldbrugs of the Island of Laputa! Gulliver's hideous immortals — and then the horror of the story enveloped me, but, despite my aversion to meeting the dead, I determined to live in the chop-house till I saw face to face these ghosts from a vanished past. My curiosity was soon gratified, as the sequel will show.

Just one week after the appearance of this pair I stood talking to the Irish barman, when I saw him start and pale. Ha! I thought, here are my men. I was not mistaken. Two well-built and well-groomed gentlemen asked for brandy, and swallowed it in silence. They were polite enough to avoid my rather rude stare. No wonder I stared. They recalled familiar

faces, yet I couldn't at once place the owners. Presently they went over to a table and seated themselves. Loudly calling for a mug of musty ale, I boldly put myself at an adjacent spot, and continued my spying tactics. The friends were soon in hot dispute. It concerned the literary reputation of Balzac. I sat with my mouth wide open.

The elder of the pair, the one called Swift, snapped at his friend: "Zounds, sir! you and your Balzac. Hogwash and roosters in rut—that's about his capacity. Of course, when your own dull stuff appeared he praised you for the sake of the paradox. You moderns! Balzac the father of French fiction! You the father, or is it grandfather, of psychology—a nice crew! That boy Maupassant had more stuff in him than a wilderness of Zolas, Goncourts, and the rest. He is almost as amusing as Paul de Kock—" The other, the little man, bristled with rage.

"Because you wrote a popular boy's book, full of filth and pessimism, you think you know all literature. And didn't you copy Cyrano de Bergerac's Voyagers, and Defoe? You satirise every one except God, whom you spare because you don't know him. I don't care much for Balzac, though I'm free to confess he did treat me handsomely in praising my Chartreuse ——"

"Good God!" I groaned, "it's Stendhal, otherwise Henry Beyle, laying down the law to the

tremendous author of Gulliver's Travels." And yet neither man looked the accepted portrait of himself. Above all, no Struldbrug moles were in view. I forgot my former fear, being interested in the dispute of these two giant writers who are more akin artistically than ever taken cognisance of by criticism. Dead? What did I care! They were surely alive now, and I was not dreaming. I didn't need to pinch myself, for my eyes and ears reported the occurrence. A miracle? Why not. Miracles are daily, if we but knew it. Living is the most wonderful of all miracles. The discussion proceeded. Swift spoke tersely, just as he wrote:

"Enough, friend Beyle. You are a charlatan. Your knowledge of the human heart is on a par with your taste in literature. You abominate Flaubert because his prose is more rhythmic than yours."

"I vow I protest," interrupted Stendhal.

"No matter. I'm right. Mérimée, your pupil, is your master at every point."

I could no longer contain myself, and, bursting with curiosity, I cried:

"Pardon me, dear masters, for interrupting such a luminous altercation, but, notwithstanding the queerness of the situation, may I not say that I meet in the flesh, Jonathan Swift and Henry Beyle-Stendhal?"

"Discovered, by the eternal Jehovah!" roared Swift, adding an obscene phrase, which

I discreetly omit. Stendhal took the incident coolly.

"As I am rediscovered about every decade by ambitious young critics anxious to achieve reputations, I am not disturbed by our young friend here. Your apology, monsieur, is accepted. Pray, join us in a fresh drink and conversation." But I was only thirsty for more talk, oceans of talk. I eagerly asked Stendhal, who regarded me with cynical eyes, all the while fingering his little whisker: "Did you ever hear Chopin play?"

"Who," he solemnly asked in turn, "is Chopin?"

"He was at his best in the forties, and as you didn't die till ——"

"Pardon me, monsieur. I never died. Your Chopin may have died, but I am immortal."

"You venerable Struldbrug," giggled Swift. I was disagreeably impressed, yet held my ground:

"You must have met him. He was a friend of Balzac — his music was then in vogue at Paris —" I stumbled in my speech.

"He probably means that little Polish piano-player who dangled at the petticoats of George Sand," interpolated Swift.

"I knew Cimarosa, Rossini I saw, but I never heard of Chopin. As for the Sand woman, that cow who chewed and rechewed her literary cud — don't mention her name to me, please. She is the village pump of fiction;

water, wet water. Balzac was bad enough." My heart sank. Chopin not even remembered by a contemporary! This then is fame. But the immortality of Stendhal, of Swift — what of that? Its reality was patent to me. Perhaps Balzac, Sand, Flaubert were still alive. I propounded the question. Swift answered it.

"Yes, they are alive. My Struldbrugs are meant to symbolise the immortality of genius. Only stupid people die. Sand is a barmaid in London. Balzac is on the road selling knit-goods, and a mighty good drummer he is sure to be; but poor Flaubert has had hard luck. He was the reader to a publishing house, and forced to pass judgment on the novels of the day — favourable judgment, mind you, on the popular stuff. He nearly burst a blood-vessel when they gave him a Marie Corelli manuscript to correct — to correct the style, mind you, he, Flaubert! The gods are certainly capricious. Now the old chap — he has aged since 1880 — is in New York reading proof at a daily newspaper office. He sits at the same desk with Ben de Casseres, and every time he mutters over the rhythm of a sentence Ben raps him on the knuckles, and says:

"'You are an old-fashioned bourgeois, Pop Flaubert! Some night I'll take you over to Jack's and recite my Sermon on Suicide, to teach you what brilliance and Bovarysme

really mean.'" I was shocked at this blasphemy, and said so. Stendhal calmly bade me to keep my temper.

"But isn't Mr. Swift joking?"

"Mr. Swift is always joking," was the far from reassuring reply. To fill in the interval I called for the waiter. The ghosts again demanded cognac. Stendhal looked like the caricature by Félicien Rops, in which his little pot-bellied figure, broad face, snub nose, and protuberant eyes are shown dominating some strange Cosmopolis of 1932. In life — or death — he seemed supremely self-satisfied. He glowered at the name of Flaubert, rejoicing in the sad existence of the mighty prose master, but he smiled superciliously when I reproached him with not knowing Chopin. Heine's poetic fantasy of the gods of Greece, alive, and still in hiding, was not precisely convincing in the present reincarnation. A feeling of repulsion ensued, and finally I arose and said good night to my very new and very old friends. Swift's picture of the Struldbrugs was realised, and it was an unpleasant one. Men of genius should never be seen; in their works alone they live. Swift, with his nasty, sly, constipated humour; Stendhal, with his overwhelming air of arrogance and superiority, did not win my sympathy. They evidently noted my dismay.

"You're disappointed. So sorry!" said Swift ironically. "At first I was vastly intrigued at the opportunity of talking with one of you

modern persons, but I see I'm mistaken — ha! Beyle, what d'ye say?"

Stendhal pondered. "Cimarosa, Rossini, and Haydn I knew. Correggio I admire, but who was Chopin?"

Stung to anger, I retorted: "Yours is the loss, not Chopin's." Whereat Michael, the bartender, merrily laughed, and the company joined him. I was the sacrificial goat. My head was on the chopping-block, and Stendhal was the executioner. Forgetting the respect due to such illustrious shades, I shook my finger under Stendhal's upturned nostrils: "You may be a couple of impostors for all I know, but even if you are not, I wish to tell you how heartily I dislike your petty carping criticisms. Better oblivion than immortality for your lean and sinister souls." Again hysterical laughter. As I left I overheard Swift say in reproachful accents, as if his vanity had been wounded:

"This saucy Yahoo reads our books and believes in them, but when we talk he doubts us. As Sam Johnson used to say, 'The reciprocal civility of authors is one of the most risible scenes in the farce of life.'"

Stendhal boomed out: "He is dead himself but doesn't know it yet. All critics are stillborn. But *we* live on for ever. Garçon! some more brandy."

Out on crowded, expressive Broadway I stood, dazed and irritated. After all the pa-

laver of authors, it is the critic who has the last word, like a woman. Rejoicing over the originality of the idea, I went my wooden way.

CHAPTER XIII

ON REREADING MALLOCK

It seems the "dark backward and abysm of time" when writing the name of William Hurrell Mallock, yet not forty years ago he was the most discussed author of his day. The old conundrum, Is Life Worth Living? he revived, and newly orchestrated with particular reference to the spiritual needs of the hour. And A Romance of the Nineteenth Century was denounced as immoral as Mademoiselle de Maupin. Gautier was read then and Swinburne's lilting paganism quite filled the lyric sky. Mr. Mallock's rôle was that of a philosophical novelist and essayist who reproved the golden materialism of his age, not with fuliginous menace, as did Carlyle, nor with melodious indignation, like Ruskin, but with a more subtle instrument of castigation, irony. He laughed at the gods of the new scientific dispensation, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Clifford, and he put them in the pages of his New Republic for the delectation of the world, and most appealing foolery it was; this and the sheer burlesque of The New Paul and Virginia. Mr. Mallock was an individualist. The influence of John Stuart Mill had not yet waned in the seventies — he occupied then a

place midway between Bentham and Spencer. His birth, breeding, and temperament made Mallock a foe to socialism, to the promiscuous in politics, religion, society, therefore an apostle of culture, not missing its precious side; witness Mr. Rose in The New Republic, and one who abhorred the crass and the irreverent in the New Learning. He enjoyed vogue. His ideas were boldly seized and transformed by the men of the nineties, yet to-day it is difficult to get a book of his. They are mostly out of print — which is equivalent to saying, out of mind.

With what personal charm he invested his romances! He is the literary progenitor of a long line of young men, artistic in taste, a trifle sceptical as to final causes, wealthy, worldly, widely cultured, and aristocratic. The staler art of Oscar Wilde gives the individual of Mallock petrified into a rather unpleasant type. Walter Pater's fear that the word "hedonist" would be suspected as immoral came true in Wilde's books. The heroes of A Romance of the Nineteenth Century, Tristram Lacy and The New Republic have a strong family resemblance. They were supermen before Nietzsche was discovered. They are prepossessed by theological problems, they love the seven arts, and are a trifle decadent; though when action is demanded they do not fail to respond. As stories go, A Romance is the best of Mallock's; the canvas of Tristram Lacy is larger, the in-

trigue less intense, and the characterisation more human. The unhappy girl, Cynthia Walters, who so shocked our mothers, is not duplicated in Tristram. Mr. Mallock wrote a preface to the second edition of A Romance, a superfluous one, for the book needs no apology. It never did. It is as moral as Madame Bovary, though not as pleasant. The Triangle is a revered convention in French fiction, but the naturalistic photographs in A Romance are not agreeable, and Cynthia's epitaph, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. It is in the mode ironical almost projected to the key of cynicism. No doubt the leisurely gait of these fictions would be old-fashioned to the present generation, with its preference for staccato English, morbid sensationalism, and lack of grace and scholarship. Mr. Mallock is a scholar and a gentleman who writes a prose of distinction, and he is also a thinker, reactionary, to be sure, but a tilter at sham philosophies and sham religions. Last, but not least, he has abundant humour and a most engaging wit. Possibly all these qualities would make him unpopular in our present century.

What a gathering of choice spirits in The New Republic: Matthew Arnold, Professor Jowett — a fine character etching — Huxley, Tyndall, Carlyle, Pater — rather cruelly treated — Ruskin, Doctor Pusey, Mrs. Mark Pattison, W. K. Clifford, Violet Fane — how the

author juggles with their personalities, with their ideas. It's the cleverest parody of its kind. Otho Laurence and Robert Leslie are closely related in aspirations to Ralph Vernon, Alie Campbell, and the priest Stanley of A Romance. As portraits, those of the Premier Lord Runcorn in Tristram Lacy, and the faded dandy, poet, and man about town, Lord Surbiton, of A Romance, are difficult to match outside of Disraeli. Epigrams drop like snowflakes. The décor is always gorgeous — Monte Carlo, Provence, Cap de Juan, countries flowing with milk and honey, marble ruins, the ilex, cypress, and palm. Palaces there are, and inhabited by languid, fascinating young men who anxiously examine in the glass their expressive countenances, asking the Lord whether He is pleased with them. And lovely girls, charming, and in Cynthia Walters's case a lily with a cankered calyx. Then there are the Price-Bousefields and the inimitable Mrs. Norham, "celebrated authoress and upholder of the people." One of the notable blackguards in fiction is Colonel Stapleton; and the Poodle and the new-rich Helbecksteins — a complete picture-gallery may be found in these interesting novels. Romance rules; poetry, tenderness in the appreciation of the eternal feminine, and a pity for living things. Poor Cynthia Walters, the "dear, dead woman," lingers in the memory, as modern as yesterday, and as effaced as a daguerreotype.

But if his heroes sow their oats tamely Mr. Mallock as an antagonist is most vigorous. He went at the scientific men with all the weapons in his armoury. To-day there no longer exists the need of such polemics. In the moral world there are analogies to the physical, and particularly in geology, with its prehistoric stratifications, its vast herbarium, its quarries and petrifications, its ossuaries, the bones of vanished forms, ranging from the shadow of a leaf to the flying crocodile, the horrid pterodactyl — now reduced to the exquisite and iridescent dragon-fly; from the monstrous mammoth to the tiny forerunner of the horse. Philosophy and Religion, too, have their mighty dead, their immemorial tombs wherein repose the bones of the buried dead skeletons of obsolete systems. And on the sands of time lie the arch-images of antique thought awaiting the condign catastrophe. There are Kant and his followers, and near the idealists are the materialists; next to Hegel is Büchner, and at the base of the vast structure so patiently reared by Herbert Spencer the mists are already dense, though not as obscuring as the clouds about the mausoleum of Comte. That great charmless woman, George Eliot, smiles a smile of sombre ennui before the Spencer tomb, and the invisible voice of Ernest Haeckel is heard whispering: Where is your Positivism? Where is your Rationalism? What has become of your gaseous invertebrate god? Surely

there is sadly required in the cynical universities of the world a Chair of Irony with subtle Edgar Saltus as its first incumbent.

Now, Mr. Mallock knows that religion and philosophy may travel on parallel lines, therefore never collide. He took the catch-word "the bankruptcy of science" too seriously. Notwithstanding the persuasive rhetoric of that silken sophist Henri Bergson, a belated visionary metaphysician in a world of realities, the trend of latter-day thought is toward the veritable victories of science. A new world has come into being. And what discoveries: spectral analysis, the modes of force, matter displaced by energy, the relations of atoms in molecules — a renewed geology, astronomy, palæontology, biology, embryology, wireless telegraphy, the conquest of the air, and, last but not least, the discovery of radium. The slightly war-worn evolution theory is now confronted by the Transformism of Hugo de Vries, who has shown in a most original manner that nature also proceeds by sudden leaps as well as in slow, orderly progress. And the brain, that telephonic centre, according to Bergson, is become another organ. Ramon y Cujol, the Spanish biologist, with his neurons — little erectile bodies in the cells of the cortex, stirred to motor impulses when a message is sent them from the sensory nerves — has done more for positive knowledge than a wilderness of metaphysicians.

ON REREADING MALLOCK

That famous interrogation, "Is life worth living?" may be viewed to-day from a different angle. Mr. Mallock acknowledged that the question must be answered in the terms of the individual only. Here we encounter a new crux. What is the individual? The family is the unit of society, not the individual. And the autonomous "I" exists no longer, except as a unit in the colony of cells which are "We." Man is a being afloat in an ocean of vibrations. Society demands the co-operation of its component cells, else relegates to solitude the individual who cannot adapt himself to play a humble part in the cosmical orchestra. That protean theory Socialism has changed its chameleonic hues many times since Mr. Mallock wrote Is Life Worth Living? His idea is worked out with great clearness in the apprehension of details, but with little feeling for their relations to each other. Sadly considered, we may take it for granted that life has a definite aim. We live, as a modern thinker puts it, because we stand like the rest of cognisable nature under the universal law of causality; this idea is founded not on a metaphysical but a biological basis. Metaphysics is a pleasing diversion, though it doesn't get us to finalities. Happiness is an absolute. Therefore it has no existence. There never was, there never will be an earthly paradise, no matter what the socialists say. Content is the summum bonum of mankind; the content that comes with

sound health and a clear conscience. The wrangling over Free Will is now considered a sign of ghost-worship.

Schopenhauer and his mystic Will-to-Live are both rather amusing survivals of antique animism. The problem is not whether we can do what we want to do, but whether we can will what we want to will. But the illusion of individual freedom of will is the last illusion to be dissipated in this most deterministic of worlds and most pluralistic of universes. It's a poor conception of eternity that doesn't work both ways. As there will be no end to things, there never was a beginning. Eternity is now. Professor Hugh S. R. Elliott wrote in his brilliant refutation of Bergson that "the feeling we have of a necessity for such an explanation [the attempt to explain the universe] arises from the conformation of our brains, which think by associating disjoined ideas; . . . no last explanation is possible or perhaps even exists," which will please the relativists and pain the absolutists. But deprive mankind of its dreams and it is like the naughty child in Hans Christian Andersen's fable. A fairy punished this child by giving him dreamless slumber. Without vision, old as well as young limp through life.

Pessimism as a philosophy, it has been pointed out, is the last superstition of primordial times. It is a form of egomania. From Byron to D'Annunzio pessimism filled poetry;

from Werther to Sanine it has ruled fiction. It is less a philosophy than a matter of temperament. It was the mode during the last century, and as an issue is as dead as the humanitarianism that followed. Is life worth living? was properly, if somewhat cynically, answered: It depends on the liver. Pessimism is the pathetic fallacy reduced to medicinal formula. It is now merely in our stock of mental attitudes, usually a pose; when it is not, it's bound to be pathological. Yet Bossuet has spoken of "the inexorable ennui which forms the basis of life." Mr. Mallock was once accused of dilettanteism, æsthetic and ethical; nevertheless, there is no mistaking his moral earnestness at the close of Is Life Worth Living? Furthermore, he foresaw the muddle the world is making to-day in the conduct of life. All the self-complacent chatter about self-annihilation during the Buddhist upheaval some decades ago has been translated into a veritable annihilation. The holy name of Altruism — social emotion made functional — has vanished into the intense inane. The higher forms of discontent have modulated into the debasing superstition of universal slaughter. With Bergson the divinity of diving into the subconscious — what else is his intuition? — is set before the lovers of the mystic to worship. Years ago the Sufi doctrine declared that the judging faculty should be abandoned for the intuitive. Don't reason! Just dream! The poet Rogers

replied to a lady who asked his religion that his was the religion of all sensible men. "And what is that?" she persisted. "That no sensible men ever tell." But Mr. Mallock has told, and four decades after his confession he is still worth rereading.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LOST MASTER

"WHAT'S become of Waring since he gave us all the slip?" was quoted by a man at the Painters' Club the other night. What made him think of Browning, he blandly explained to the two or three chaps sitting at his table on the terrace, was not the terrific heat, but the line swam across his memory when he recalled the name of Albertus Magnus as a green meteor seen for a moment far out at sea drops into the watery void. "Who, in the name of Apollo, is Albertus Magnus?" was asked. The painter sat up. "There you are, you fellows!" he roared. "You all paint or write or spoil marble, but for the history of your art you don't care a rap." "Yes, but what has your Albertus Thingamajig to do with Browning's Waring?" "Only this," was the grumbling reply; "it is a similar case." "A story, a story!" we all cried, and settled down for a yarn; but no yarn was spun. The painter relapsed into silence, and the group gradually dissolved. We sat still, hoping against hope.

"See here," we expostulated, "really you should not arouse expectations, and then evade the logical conclusions. It's not fair." "I

didn't care to explain to those other fellows," was the reply. "They are too cynical for my taste. They go to the holy of holies of art to pray, and come away to scoff. Materialism, rather realism, as you call it, is the canker of modern art. Suppose I told you that here, now, in this noisy Tophet of New York, there lives a man of genius, who paints like a belated painter of the Renaissance? Suppose I said that I could show you his work, would you think I was crazy?" He paused. "A young genius, poor, unknown? Oh, lead us to him, Sir Painter, and we shall call you blest!" "He is not young, and, while the great public and the little dealers have not heard of him, he has a band of admirers, rich men leagued in a conspiracy of silence, who buy his pictures, though they don't show them to the critics." We reiterated our request: "Lead us to him!" Without noticing our importunities, he continued: "He paints for the sake of beautiful paint; he paints as did Hokusai, the Old-Man-Mad-for-Painting, or like Frenhofer, the hero in Balzac's story, The Unknown Masterpiece! He is more like Balzac's Frenhofer — is that the chap's name? — than Browning's Waring. He is the lost master, a Frenhofer who has conquered, for he has a hundred masterpieces stored away in his studio." "Lost master?" we stuttered; "a hundred masterpieces that have never been shown to critic or public? Oh! 'Never star was lost here but it

rose afar.'" "Yes, and he quotes Browning by the yard, for he was a close friend of the poet, and of his best critic, Nettleship, the animal painter, now dead." "Won't you tell his story connectedly, and put us out of our agony?" we pleaded. "No," he answered; "I'll do better. I'll take you to his studio." The evening ended in a blaze of fireworks.

The afternoon following we found ourselves in Greenwich Village, in front of a row of old-fashioned cottages covered with honeysuckle. You may recall the avenue and this particular block that has thus far resisted the temptation to become either lofty apartment or business palace. But the painter met us here, and conducted us westward until we reached a warehouse — gloomy, in need of repair, yet solid, despite the teeth of time. We entered the wagonway, traversed a dirty court, mounted a dark staircase, and paused before a low door. "Do you knock," we were admonished, and at once did so. Approaching footsteps. A rattling and grating of rusty bolts and keys. The door was slowly opened. A big hairy head appeared. The eyes set in this halo of white hair were positively the most magnificent I had ever seen sparkle and glow in a human countenance. If a lion were capable of being at once poet and prophet and exalted animal, his eyes would have possessed something of the glance of this stranger. We turned anxiously to to our friend. He had disappeared. What a

trick to play at such a moment. "Who do you wish?" rumbled a mellow voice. "Albertus Magnus?" we timidly inquired, expecting to be pitched down the stairs the next minute. "Ah!" was the reply. Silence. Then, "Come in, please; don't stumble over the canvases." We followed the old man, whose stature was not as heroic as his head; and we did not fail to stumble, for the way was obscure, and paved with empty frames, canvases, and a litter of bottles, paint-tubes, easels, rugs, carpets, wretched furniture, and all the other flotsam and jetsam of an old-style studio. We were not sorry when we came into open space and light. We were in the room that doubtless concealed the lost masterpieces, and there, blithely smoking a cigarette, sat our guide, the painter. He had entered by another door, he explained; and, without noticing our discontented air, he introduced us to the man of the house. In sheer daylight he looked younger, though his years must have bordered upon the biblical threescore and ten. But the soul, the brain that came out of his wonderful eyes, were as young as to-morrow.

"Isn't he a corker?" irreverently demanded our friend. "He is not even as old as he looks. He doesn't eat vegetables, when thirsty he drinks anything he can get, and smokes day and night. And yet he calls himself an idealist." The old painter smiled. "I suppose I have been described as Waring to you, because I

knew Robert Browning. I did vanish from the sight of my friends for years, but only in the attempt to conquer paint, not to achieve money or kingship, like the original Alfred Domett, called Waring in the poem. But when I returned from Italy I was a stranger in a strange land. No one remembered me. I had last seen Elihu Vedder at Capri. Worst of all, I had forgotten that with time fashions change in art as in dress, and nowadays no one understands me, and, with the exception of Arthur Davies, I understand no one. I come from the Venetians, Davies from the early Florentines; his line is as beautiful as Pollajuolo. I love gold more than did Facino Cano of Balzac. Gold, ah! luscious gold, the lost secret of the masters. Tell me, do you love Titian?" We swore allegiance to the memory of Titian. The artist seemed pleased. "You younger men are devoted to Velasquez and Hals — too much so. Great as painters, possibly greatest among painters, their souls never broke away from the soil like runaway balloons. They miss height and depth. Their colour never sings like Titian's. They surprise secrets in the eyes of their sitters, but never the secret surprised by the Italian. I sat at his feet, before his canvases, fifty years, and I'm further away than ever —" Our friend interrupted this rhapsody.

"Look here, Albertus, you man with a name out of Thomas Aquinas, don't you think you are playing on your visitors' nerves, just to

set them on edge with expectancy? I've heard this choral service for the glorification of Titian more than once, and I've inevitably noticed that you had a trump of your own up your sleeve. You love Titian. Well, admit it. You don't paint like him, your colour scheme is something else, and what you are after you only know yourself. Come! trot out your Phantom Ship or The Cascade of Gold, or, better still, that landscape with a river-bank and shepherds." The old man gravely bowed. Then he manipulated the light, placed a big easel in proper position, fumbled among the canvases that made the room smaller, secured one and placed it before us. We drew a long breath. "Richard Wagner, not Captain Maryatt, was the inspiration," murmured the master.

The tormented vessel stormed down the picture, every inch of sail bellying out in a wind that blew a gale infernal beneath the rays, so it seemed to us, of a poisonous golden moon. The water was massive and rhythmic. In the first plane a smaller ship does not even attempt to tack. You anticipate the speedy crackling and smashing when the Flying Dutchman rides over her; but it never happens. Like the moonshine, the phantom ship may melt into air-bubbles before it reaches the other boat. No figures are shown. Nevertheless, as we studied the picture we fancied that we discerned the restless soul of Vander-

decken pacing his quarter-deck, cursing the elements, or longing for some far-away Senta. A poetic composition handled with masterly evasiveness, the colour was the strangest part of it. Where had Albertus caught the secret of that flowing gold, potable gold; gold that threateningly blazed in the storm wrack, gold as lyric as sunshine in spring! And why such sinister gold in a moonlit sea? We suspected illusion. My friend, the painter, laughed: "Aha! you are looking for the sun, and is it only a moon overhead? Our conjurer here has a few tricks. Know then, credulous one, that the moon yonder is really the sun. Seek the reason for that suffused back sky, realise that the solar photosphere in a mist is precisely the breeder of all this magic gold you so envy." "Yes," we exclaimed, "but the motion of it all, the grip! Only Turner—" We were interrupted by a friendly slap on the back. "Now, you are talking sense," said our friend. "Turner, a new Turner, who has heard the music of Wagner and read the magic prose of Joseph Conrad." What followed we shall not pretend to describe. Landscapes of old ivory and pearly greys; portraits, in which varnish modulated with colours of a gamut of intensity that set tingling the eyeballs, and played a series of tonal variations in the thick of which the theme was lost, hinted at, emerged triumphantly, and at the end vanished in the glorious arabesque; then followed apocalyptic visions,

in which the solid earth staggered through the empyrean after a black sun — a magnetic disk doomed by a mighty voice that cried aloud: "It is accomplished." Pastorals as ravishing as Giorgione's, with nuances of gold undreamed of since the yellow flecks in the robes of Rembrandt, faced us. Our very souls centred in our eyes; but, uncritical as was our mood in the presence of all this imaginative art, we could not help noting that it was without a single trait of the modern. Both in theme and treatment these pictures might have been painted at the time of the Renaissance. The varnish was as wonderful as that on the belly of a Stradivarius fiddle. The blues were of a celestial quality to be found in Titian or Vermeer; the resonant browns, the whites — ah! such exquisite whites, "plus blanche que la plus blanche hermine"— the rich blacks, sonorous reds and yellows — what were all these but secrets recovered from the old masters. The subjects were mainly legendary or mythological; no discordant note of "modernity" obtruded its ugly self. We were in the presence of something as rare as a lyric by Shelley or the playing of Frederic Chopin.

What! Why! How! we felt like asking all at once, but Albertus Magnus only smiled, and we choked our emotion. Why had he never exhibited at the Academy or at a special show? Our friend saw our embarrassment, and shielded us by blurting out: "No! he never

exhibited, this obstinate Albertus. He never will. He makes more money than he needs, and will leave it to some cat asylum, for he is a hardened bachelor. Women do not interest him. You won't find one female head in all this amazing collection. Nor has the dear old Diogenes suffered from a love-affair. His only love is his paint. His one weakness is a selfish, a miserly desire to keep all this beautiful paint for himself. Balzac would have delighted to analyse such a peculiar mania. Degas is amiability itself compared with this curmudgeon of genius. Now, don't stop me, Albertus —" "But I must," expostulated the painter. "I am always glad to receive visitors here if they are not dealers or persons ignorant of art, or those who think the moderns can paint. Yet no one comes to see me. My chattering friend here occasionally asks them, and he is a hoaxer. While I go nowhere — I haven't been east of Ninth Avenue for years. What shall I do?" "Paint!" was the curt answer of our friend, as we took our leave. In New York, now, a painter of genius who is known to few! Extraordinary! Is his name really Albertus Magnus, or is that only Latin for Albert Ryder? Our friend shrugged his shoulders and smiled mysteriously. We hate tomfoolery. "Be frank!" we adjured him. He hummed: "In Vishnu land what avatar?" "More Browning!" we sneered.

Then we crossed over to the club and talked

art far into the night. Also wet our clay. And Albertus Magnus, will he never come from his paint cave and reveal to the world his masterpieces? Perhaps. Who knows? As the Russians say — *Avos!*

CHAPTER XV

THE GRAND MANNER IN PIANOFORTE PLAYING

HERE lies one whose name is writ on ivory! might be the epigraph of every great pianist's life, and the ivory is about as perdurable stuff as the water in which is written the epitaph of John Keats. Despite cunning reproductive contrivances the executive musician has no more chance of lasting fame than the actor. The career of both is brief, but brilliant. Glory, then, is largely a question of memory, and when the contemporaries of a tonal artist pass away then he has no existence except in the biographical dictionaries. Creative, not interpretative, art endures. Better be "immortal" while you are alive, which wish may account for the number of young men who write their memoirs while their cheeks are still virginal of beards, while the pianist or violinist plays his autobiography, and this may be some compensation for the eternal injustice manifested in matters mundane.

Whosoever heard the lion-like velvet paws of Anton Rubinstein caress the keyboard shall never forget the music. He is the greatest pianist in my long and varied list. Think of

his delivery of the theme at the opening of Beethoven's G major concerto; or in that last page of Chopin's Barcarolle. It was no longer the piano tone, but the sound of distant waters and horns from elf-land. A mountain of fire blown skyward, when the elemental in his profoundly passionate temperament broke loose, he could roar betimes as gently as a dove. Yet, when I last heard him in Paris, the few remaining pupils of Chopin declared that he was brutal in his treatment of their master. He played Rubinstein, not Chopin, said Georges Mathias to me. Mathias knew, for he had heard the divine Frédéric play. Nevertheless, Rubinstein played Chopin, the greater and the miniature, as no one before or since.

To each generation its music-making. The "grand manner" in piano-playing has almost vanished. A few artists still live who illustrate this manner; you may count them on the fingers of one hand. Rosenthal, D'Albert, Carreño, Friedheim — Reisenaur had the gift, too — how many others? Paderewski I heard play in Leipsic in 1912 at a Gewandhaus concert under the baton of the greatest living conductor, Arthur Nikisch, and I can vouch for the plangent tone quality and the poetic reading he displayed in his performance of that old war-horse, the F minor concerto of Chopin. Furthermore, my admiration of Paderewski's gift as a composer was considerably increased after hearing his Polish symphony interpreted by Nikisch.

How far away we were from Manru. Joseffy, who looked upon Paderewski, as a rare personality, told me that the Polish Fantasy for piano and orchestra puzzled him because of its seeming simplicity in figuration. "Only the composer," enthusiastically exclaimed Joseffy, "could have made it so wonderful."

But the grand manner, has it become too artificial, too rhetorical? It has gone out of fashion with the eloquence of the old histrions, probably because of the rarity of its exponents; also because it no longer appeals to a matter-of-fact public. Liszt was the first. He was dithyrambic. He was a volcano; Thalberg — his one-time rival — possessed all the smooth and icy perfections of Nesselrode pudding. Liszt in reality never had but two rivals close to his throne; Karl Tausig, the Pole, and Anton Rubinstein, the Russian. Von Bülow was all intellect; his Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, and Brahms were cerebral, not emotional. He had the temperament of the pedant. I first heard him in Philadelphia in 1876 at the Academy of Music. He introduced the Tschaikovsky B flat minor concerto, with B. J. Lang directing the orchestra, a quite superfluous proceeding, as Von Bülow gave the cues from the keyboard and distinctly cursed the conductor, the band, the composition, and his own existence, as befitted a disciple of Schopenhauer. Oh! he could be fiery enough, though in his playing of the Romantics the fervent note was absent; but

his rhythmic attack was crisp and irresistible. You need only recall the pungency of his reading of Beethoven's Scherzo in the Sonata Opus 31, No. 3. It was staccato as a hail-storm. Two years later, in Paris, I heard the same concerto played by Nicholas Rubinstein at the Trocadéro (Exposition, 1878), the very man who had first flouted the work so rudely that Tschaikovsky, deeply offended, changed the dedication to Von Bülow.

Anton Rubinstein displayed the grand manner. His style was a compound of tiger's blood and honey. Notwithstanding the gossip about his "false notes" (he wrote a Study on False Notes, as if in derision), he was, with Tausig and Liszt, a supreme stylist. He was not always in practice and most of the music he wrote for his numerous tours was composed in haste and repented of at leisure. It is now almost negligible. The D minor concerto reminds one of a much-traversed railroad-station. But Rubinstein the virtuoso! It was in 1873 I heard him, but I was too young to understand him. Fifteen years later, or thereabouts, he gave his Seven Historical Recitals in Paris and I attended the series, not once, but twice. He played many composers, but for me he seemed to be playing the Book of Job, the Apocalypse, and the Scarlet Sarafan. He had a ductile tone like a golden French horn — Joseffy's comparison —and the power and passion of the man have never been equalled. Neither Tausig nor

Liszt did I hear, worse luck, but there were plenty of witnesses to tell me of the differences. Liszt, it seems, when at his best, was both Rubinstein and Tausig combined, with Von Bülow thrown in. Anton Rubinstein played every school with consummate skill, from the iron certitudes of Bach's polyphony to the magic murmurs of Chopin and the romantic rustling in the moonlit garden of Schumann. Beethoven, too, he interpreted with intellectual and emotional vigour. Yet this magnificent Calmuck — he wasn't of course, though he had Asiatic features — grew weary of his instrument, as did Liszt, and fought the stars in their courses by composing. But his name is writ in ivory, and not in enduring music.

Scudo said that when Sigismund Thalberg played, his scales were like perfectly strung pearls falling on scarlet velvet; with Liszt the pearls had become red hot. This extravagant image is of value. We have gone back to the Thalbergian pearls, for too much passion in piano-playing is voted bad taste today. Nuance, then colour, and ripe conception. Technique for technique's sake is no longer a desideratum; furthermore, as Felix Leifels wittily remarked: "No one plays the piano badly"; just as no one acts Hamlet disreputably. Mr. Leifels, as a veteran contrabassist and at present manager of the Philharmonic Society, ought to be an authority on the subject; the old Philharmonic has had all the

pianists, from H. C. Timm, in 1844 — a Hummel concerto — to Thalberg and Rubinstein, Joseffy, Padèrewski, and Josef Hofmann. Truly the standard of virtuosity is higher than it was a quarter of a century ago. Girls give recitals with programmes that are staggering. The Chopin concertos now occupy the position, technically speaking, of the Hummel and Mendelssohn concertos. Every one plays Chopin as a matter of course, and, with a few exceptions horribly. Yes, Mr. Leifels is right; no one plays the piano badly, yet new Rubinsteins do not materialise.

The year of the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, 1876, was a memorable one for visiting pianists. I heard not only Hans von Bülow, but also two beautiful women, one at the apex of her artistic career, Annette Essipoff (or Essipowa) and Teresa Carreño, just starting on her triumphal road to fame. Essipowa was later the wife of Leschetizky — maybe she was married then — and she was the most poetic of all women pianists that I have heard. Clara Schumann was as musical, but she was aged when I listened to her. Essipowa played Chopin as only a Russian can. They are all Slavs, these Poles and Russians, and no other nation, except the Hungarian, interpret Chopin. Probably the greatest German virtuoso was Adolf Henselt, Bavarian-born, though a resident of Petrograd. He had a Chopin-like temperament and played that

master's music so well that Schumann called him the "German Chopin." Essipowa, I need hardly tell you, communicated no little of her gracious charm to Paderewski. He learned more from her plastic style than from all the precepts of Leschetizky.

On a hot night in 1876, and in old Association Hall, I first saw and heard Teresa (then Teresita) Carreño. I say "saw" advisedly, for she was a blooming girl, and at the time shared the distinction with Adelaide Neilson and Mrs. Scott-Siddons of being one of the three most beautiful women on the stage. Carreño, still vital, still handsome, and still the conquering artist, till her death last spring, was in that far-away day fresh from Venezuela, a pupil of Gottschalk and Anton Rubinstein. She wore a scarlet gown, as fiery as her playing, and when I wish to recall her I close my eyes and straightway as if in a scarlet mist I see her, hear her; for her playing has always been scarlet to me, as Rubinstein's is golden, and Joseffy's silvery.

The French group I have heard, beginning with Theodore Ritter, who came to New York in company with Carlotta Patti; Planté — still living and over eighty, so I have been told by M. Phillipp; Saint-Saëns, whom I first saw and heard at the Trocadéro, Paris, with his pupil, Montigny-Remaury; Clotilde Kleeberg, Diémer, Risler; the venerable Georges Mathias, a pupil of Chopin; Raoul Pugno, who was

veritably a pugnacious pianist, Cécile Chaminade, Marie Jaell, and her corpulent husband, Alfred Jaell.

Eugen d'Albert, surely the greatest of Scotch pianists — he was born at Glasgow, though musically educated in London — is another heaven-stormer. I heard him at Berlin some years ago, in Philharmonic Hall, and people stood up in their excitement — Liszt redivivus!

It was the grand manner in its most chaotic form. A musical volcano belching up lava, scoriæ, rocks, hunks of Beethoven — the Appassionata Sonata it happened to be — while the infuriated little Vulcan threw emotional fuel into his furnace. The unfortunate instrument must have been a mass of splintered steel, wood, and wire after the musical giant had finished. It was a magnificent spectacle, and the music glorious. Eugen d'Albert, whether he is or isn't the son of Karl Tausig — as Weimar gossip had it; Weimar, when in the palmy days every other pianist you met was a natural son of Liszt — or else pretended to be one — has more than a moiety of that virtuoso's genius. He is a great artist, and occasionally the magic fire flares and lights up the firmament of music.

I think it was in 1879 that Rafael Joseffy visited us for the first time; but I didn't hear him till 1880. The reason I remember the date is that this greatly beloved Hungarian

made his début at old Chickering Hall (then at Fifth Avenue and Eighteenth Street); but I saw him in Steinway Hall. Another magician with a peculiarly personal style. In the beginning you thought of the aurora borealis, shooting-stars, and exquisite meteors; a beautiful style, though not a classic interpreter then. With the years Joseffy deepened and broadened. The iridescent shimmer was never absent. No one played the E minor Concerto of Chopin as did Joseffy. He had the tradition from his beloved master, Tausig, as Tausig had it from Chopin by way of Liszt. (Tausig always regretted that he had never heard Chopin play.) Joseffy, in turn, transmitted the tradition to his early pupil, Moriz Rosenthal, in whose répertoire it is the most Chopinesque of all his performances.

And do you remember the Chevalier de Kontski, Carl Baermann, Franz Rummel, S. B. Mills — who introduced here so many modern concertos — the huge Norwegian Edmund Neupert, who lived at the Hotel Liszt, next door to Steinway Hall, Constantin von Sternberg, and Max Vogrich, the Hungarian with the Chopin-like profile?

In the same school as Joseffy is the capricious De Pachmann; with Joseffy I sat at the first recital of this extraordinary Russian in Chickering Hall (1890). Joseffy, with his accustomed generosity of spirit — he was the most sympathetic and human of great virtuosi — at once

recognised the artistic worth of Vladimir de Pachmann. This last representative of a school that included the names of Hummel, Cramer, Field, Thalberg, Chopin, the little De Pachmann (he was then bearded like a pirate) captivated us. It was all miniature, without passion or pathos or the grand manner, but in its genre his playing was perfection; the polished perfection of an intricately carved ivory ornament. De Pachmann played certain sides of Chopin incomparably; capriciously, even perversely. In a small hall, sitting on a chair that precisely suited his fidgety spirit, then, if in the mood, a recital by him was something unforgettable.

After De Pachmann — Paderewski. Paderewski, the master-colourist, the grand visionary, whose art is often strained, morbid, fantastic. And after Paderewski? Why, Leopold Godowsky, of course. He belongs to the Joseffy-De Pachmann, not to the Rubinstein-Josef Hofmann, group. I once called him the superman of piano-playing. Nothing like him, as far as I know, is to be found in the history of piano-playing since Chopin. He is an apparition. A Chopin doubled by a contrapuntalist. Bach and Chopin. The spirit of the German cantor and the Polish tone-poet in curious conjunction. His playing is transcendental; his piano compositions the transcendentalism of the future. That way, else retrogression! All has been accomplished in

ideas and figuration. A new synthesis — the combination of seemingly disparate elements and styles — with innumerable permutations, he has accomplished. He is a miracle-worker. The Violet Ray. Dramatic passion, flame, and fury are not present; they would be intruders on his map of music. The piano tone is always legitimate, never forced. But every other attribute he boasts. His ten digits are ten independent voices recreating the ancient polyphonic art of the Flemings. He is like a Brahma at the piano. Before his serene and all-embracing vision every school appears and disappears in the void. The beauty of his touch and tone are only matched by the delicate adjustment of his phrasing to the larger curve of the composition. Nothing musical is foreign to him. He is a pianist for pianists, and I am glad to say that the majority of them gladly recognise this fact.

One evening Godowsky was playing his piano sonata with its subtle intimations of Brahms, Chopin, and Liszt, and its altogether Godowskian colour and rhythmic life — he is the greatest creator of rhythmic values since Liszt, and that is a "large order"— when he was interrupted by the entrance of Josef Hofmann. Godowsky and Hofmann are as inseparable as were Chopin and Liszt. Heine called the latter pair the Dioscurii of music. In the Godowsky apartment stood several concert grands. Hofmann nonchalantly re-

moved his coat and, making an apology for disturbing us, he went into another room and soon we heard him slowly practising. What do you suppose? Some new concerto with new-fangled bedevilments? O Sancta Simplicitas! This giant, if ever there was one, played at a funereal tempo the octave passages in the left hand of the Heroic Polonaise of Chopin (Opus 53). Every schoolgirl rattles them off as "easy," but, with the humility of a great artist, Hofmann practised the section as if it were still a stumbling-block. De Lenz records that Tausig did the same.

Later, Conductor Artur Bodanzky of the Metropolitan Opera dropped in, and several pianists and critics followed, and soon the Polish pianist was playing for us all some well-known compositions by a certain Dvorsky; also an extremely brilliant and effective concert study in C minor by Constantin von Sternberg. From 1888, when he was a wonder-child here, Jozio Hofmann's artistic development has been logical and continuous. His mellow muscularity evokes Rubinstein. No one plays Rubinstein as does this Harmonious Blacksmith — and with the piety of Rubinstein's pet pupil. I once compared him to a steam-hammer, whose marvellous sensitivity enables it to crack an egg-shell or crush iron. Hofmann's range of tonal dynamics is unequalled, even in this age of perfected piano technique. He is at home in all schools, and his knowledge is enormous.

At moments his touch is as rich as a Kneisel Quartet accord.

At the famous Rudolph Schirmer dinner, given in 1915, among other distinguished guests there were nearly a score of piano virtuosi. The newspapers humorously commented upon the fact that there was not a squabble, though with so many nationalities one row, at least, might have been expected. As a matter of fact, if any discussion had arisen it would not have been over politics, but about the fingering of the Double-Note Study in G sharp minor of Chopin, so difficult to play slowly — the most formidable of argument-breeding questions among pianists. A parterre of pianists, indeed, some in New York because of the war, while Paderewski and Rosenthal were conspicuous by their absence. Think of a few names: Joseffy — he died several months later, Gabrilowitsch, Hofmann, Godowsky, Carl Friedberg, Mark Hambourg — a heaven-stormer in the Rubinstein-Hercules manner—Leonard Borwick, Alexander Lambert, Ernest Schelling, Stojowski, Percy Grainger — the young Siegfried of the Antipodes — August Fraemcke, Cornelius Ruebner, and — another apparition in the world of piano-playing — Ferruccio Busoni.

This Italian, the greatest of Italian piano virtuosi — the history of which can claim such names as Domenico Scarlatti, Clementi, Fumigalli, Martucci, Sgambati — is also a composer who has set agog conservative critics by the

boldness of his imagination. As an artist he may be said to embody the intellectuality of Von Bülow, the technical brilliancy of the Liszt group. Busoni is eminently a musical thinker.

America probably will never again harbour such a constellation of piano talent. I sometimes wonder if the vanished generation of piano artists played much better than those men. Godowsky, Hofmann, the lyric and most musical Harold Bauer; the many-sided, richly endowed, and charming Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Hambourg, Busoni, and Paderewski are not often matched. Heine called Thalberg a king, Liszt a prophet, Chopin a poet, Herz an advocate, Kalkbrenner a minstrel (not a negro minstrel, for a chalk-burner is necessarily white), Mme. Pleyel a sibyl, and Doehler — a pianist! The contemporary piano hierarchy might be thus classed: Josef Hofmann, a king; Paderewski, a poet; Godowsky, a prophet; Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler, a sibyl; D'Albert, a titan; Busoni, a philosopher; Rosenthal, a hero, and Alexander Lambert — a pianist. Well, Mr. Lambert may be congratulated on such an ascription; Doehler was a great technician in his day, and when the "friend of pianists" (Lambert could pattern after Schindler, whose visiting-card read: "l'Ami de Beethoven") masters his modesty an admirable piano virtuoso is revealed. So let him be satisfied with the honourable appellation of "pianist." He is in good company.

And the ladies! I am sorry I can't say, "place aux dames!" Space forbids. I've heard them all, from Arabella Goddard to Mme. Montigny-Remaury (in Paris, 1878, with her master, Camille Saint-Saëns); from Alide Topp, Marie Krebs, Anna Mehlig, Pauline Fichtner, Vera Timinoff, Ingeborg Bronsart, Madeline Schiller, to Julia Rivé-King; from Cecilia Gaul and Svarvady-Clauss to Anna Bock; from the Amazon, Sofie Menter, the most masculine of Liszt players, to Adèle Margulies, Yoland Maero, and Antoinette Szumowska-Adamowska; from Ilonka von Ravacsz to Ethel Leginska — who plays like a house afire; from Helen Hopekirk to Katharine Goodson; from Clara Schumann to Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler, Olga Samaroff, and the newly come Brazilian Guiomar Novaes — the list might be unduly prolonged.

I heard Paderewski play last spring. Surely he has now the "grand manner" in all its dramatic splendour, and without its old-fashioned pretentious rhetoric. Nor has he lost the lusciousness of his touch — a Caruso voice on the keyboard — or the poetic intensity of his Chopin and Schumann interpretations. He is still Prince Charming.

Not only do I fear prolixity, but the confusing of critical values, for I write from memory, and I admit that I've had more pleasure from the "intimate" pianists than from the forgers of tonal thunderbolts; that is — Rubinstein excepted — from such masters in minia-

ture as Joseffy, Godowsky, Carl Heyman, De Pachmann, and Paderewski. I find in the fresh, sparkling playing of Mischa Levitski, Benno Moiseivich, and Guiomar Novaes high promise for their future. The latter came here unheralded and as the pupil of that sterling virtuoso and pedagogue, Isidor Phillipp of the Paris Conservatory.

It is noteworthy that only Chopin, Liszt, and Von Bülow were Christian born among the supreme masters of the keyboard; the rest (with a few exceptions) were and are members of that race whose religious tenets specifically incline them to the love and practice of music.

CHAPTER XVI

JAMES JOYCE

WHO is James Joyce? is a question that was answered by John Quinn, who told us that the new writer was from Dublin and at present residing in Switzerland; that he is not in good health — his eyes trouble him — and that he was once a student in theology, but soon gave up the idea of becoming a priest. He is evidently a member of the new group of young Irish writers who see their country and countrymen in anything but a flattering light. Ireland, surely the most beautiful and most melancholy island on the globe, is not the Isle of Saints for those iconoclasts. George Moore is a poet who happens to write English, though he often thinks in French; Bernard Shaw, notwithstanding his native wit, is of London and the Londoners; while Yeats and Synge are essentially Celtic, and both poets. Yes, and there is the delightful James Stephen, who mingles angels' pinfeathers with rainbow gold; a magic decoction of which we never weary. But James Joyce, potentially a poet, and a realist of the De Maupassant breed, envisages Dublin and the Dubliners with a cruel scrutinising gaze. He is as truthful as Tchekov, and as grey — that

Tchekov compared with whose the "realism" of De Maupassant is romantic bric-à-brac, gilded with a fine style. Joyce is as implacably naturalistic as the Russian in his vision of the sombre, mean, petty, dusty commonplaces of middle-class life, and he sometimes suggests the Frenchman in his clear, concise, technical methods. The man is indubitably a fresh talent.

Emerson, after his experiences in Europe, became an armchair traveller. He positively despised the idea of voyaging across the water to see what is just as good at home. He calls Europe a tapeworm in the brain of his countrymen. "The stuff of all countries is just the same." So Ralph Waldo sat in his chair and enjoyed thinking about Europe, thus evading the worries of going there too often. It has its merit, this Emersonian way, particularly for souls easily disillusioned. To anticipate too much of a foreign city may result in disappointment. We have all had this experience. Paris resembles Chicago, or Vienna is a second Philadelphia at times; it depends on the colour of your mood. Few countries have been so persistently misrepresented as Ireland. It is lauded to the eleventh heaven of the Burmese or it is a place full of fighting devils in a hell of crazy politics. Of course, it is neither, nor is it the land of Lover and Lever; Handy Andy and Harry Lorrequer are there, but you never encounter them in Dublin. John Synge got nearer to the heart of the peasantry, and Yeats

and Lady Gregory brought back from the hidden spaces fairies and heroes.

Is Father Ralph by Gerald O'Donovan a veracious picture of Irish priesthood and college life? Is the fiction of Mr. Joyce representative of the middle class and of the Jesuits? A cloud of contradictory witnesses passes across the sky. What is the Celtic character? Dion Boucicault's The Shaughraun? Or isn't the pessimistic dreamer with the soul of a "wild goose," depicted in George Moore's story, the real man? Celtic magic, cried Matthew Arnold. He should have said, Irish magic, for while the Irishman is a Celt, he is unlike his brethren across the Channel. Perhaps he is nearer to the Sarmatian than the continental Celt. Ireland and Poland! The Irish and the Polish! Dissatisfied no matter under which king! Not Playboys of the Western World, but martyrs to their unhappy temperaments.

The Dublin of Mr. Joyce shows another variation of this always interesting theme. It is a rather depressing picture, his, of the daily doings of his contemporaries. His novel is called A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, a title quite original and expressive of what follows; also a title that seems to have emerged from the catalogue of an art-collector. It is a veritable portrait of the artist as a boy, a youth and a young man. From school to college, from the brothel to the confessional, from his mother's apron-strings to coarse revelry, the

hero is put to the torture by art and relates the story of his blotched yet striving soul. We do not recall a book like this since the autobiography En Route of J.-K. Huysmans. This Parisian of Dutch extraction is in the company of James Joyce. Neither writer stops at the halfway house of reticence. It's the House of Flesh in its most sordid aspects, and the human soul is occasionally illuminated by gleams from the grace of God. With both men the love of Rabelaisian speech is marked. This, if you please, is a Celtic trait. Not even the Elizabethans so joyed in "green" words, as the French say, as do some Irish. Of richest hue are his curses, and the Prince of Obliquity himself must chuckle when he overhears one Irishman consign another to everlasting damnation by the turn of his tongue.

Stephen, the hero of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, tells his student friend about his father. These were his attributes: "A medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a story-teller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a tax-gatherer, a bankrupt, at present a praiser of his own past." He could talk the devil out of the liver-wing of a turkey — as they say up Cork way. The portrait is well-nigh perfect. The wild goose over again, and ever on the wing. Stephen became violently pious after a retreat at the Jesuits'. From the extreme of riotous living he was

transformed into a militant Catholic. The reverend fathers had hopes of him. He was an excellent Latinist, but his mind was too speculative; later it proved his spiritual undoing. To analyse the sensibility of a soul mounting on flaming pinions to God is easier than to describe the modulations of a moral recidivist. Stephen fell away from his faith, though he did not again sink into the slough of Dublin low life. Cranly, the student, saw through the hole in his sceptical millstone. "It is a curious thing, do you know," Cranly said dispassionately, "how your mind is supersaturated with the religion in which you say you disbelieve." A profound remark. Once a Roman Catholic always a Roman Catholic, particularly if you are born in Ireland.

Mr. Joyce holds the scales evenly. He neither abuses nor praises. He is evidently out of key with religious life; yet he speaks of the Jesuits with affection and admiration. The sermons preached by them during the retreat are models. They are printed in full — strange material for a novel. And he can show us the black hatred caused by the clash of political and religious opinions. There is a scene of this sort in the house of Stephen's parents that simply blazes with verity. At a Christmas dinner the argument between Dante (a certain Mrs. Riordan) and Mr. Casey spoils the affair. Stephen's father carves the turkey and tries to stop the mouths of the angry man and

woman with food. The mother implores. Stephen stolidly gobbles, watching the row, which culminates with Mr. Casey losing his temper — he has had several tumblers of mountain dew and is a little "how come you so?" He bursts forth: "No God in Ireland! We have had too much God in Ireland! Away with God!" "Blasphemer! Devil!" screamed Dante, starting to her feet and almost spitting in his face. "Devil out of hell! We won! We crushed him to death! Fiend!" The door slammed behind her. Mr. Casey suddenly bowed his head on his hands with a sob of pain. "Poor Parnell!" he cried loudly. "My dead King." Naturally the dinner was not a success. Stephen noted that there were tears in his father's eyes at the mention of Parnell, but that he seemed debonair enough when the old woman unpacked her heart of vile words like a drab.

There is no denying that the novel is as a whole hardly cheerful. Its grip on life, its intensity, its evident truth, and unflinching acceptance of facts will make A Portrait disagreeable to the average reader. There is relief in the Trinity College episodes; humour of a saturnine kind in the artistic armoury of Mr. Joyce. There is no ironist like an Irishman. The book is undoubtedly written from a full heart, but the author must have sighed with relief when he wrote the last line. No one may tell the truth with impunity, and the

portrait of Stephen in its objective frigidity — as an artistic performance — and its passionate personal note, is bound to give offence in every quarter. It is too Irish to be liked by the Irish; not an infrequent paradox. The volume of tales entitled Dubliners reveals a wider range, a practised technical hand, and a gift for etching character that may be compared with De Maupassant's. A big comparison, but read such masterpieces in pity and irony as The Dead, A Painful Case, The Boarding-House or Two Gallants, and be convinced that we do not exaggerate.

Dublin, we have said elsewhere, is a huge whispering gallery. Scandal of the most insignificant order never lacks multiple echoes. From Merrion Square, from the Shelbourne, to Dalkey or Drumcondra; from the Monument to Chapelizod, the repercussion of spoken gossip is unfailing. The book Dubliners is filled with Dublinesque anecdotes. It is charged with the sights and scents and gestures of the town. The slackers who pester servant-girls for their shillings to spend on whisky; the young man in the boarding-house who succumbs to the "planted" charms of the landlady's daughter to fall into the matrimonial trap — only De Maupassant could better the telling of this too commonplace story; the middle-aged man, parsimonious as to his emotions and the tragic ending of a love-affair that had hardly begun; and the wonderfully etched plate called The

JAMES JOYCE

Dead with its hundred fine touches of comedy and satire — these but prove the claim of James Joyce's admirers that he is a writer signally gifted. A malevolent fairy seemingly made him a misanthrope. With Spinoza he could say — oh, terrifying irony! — that "mankind is not necessary" in the eternal scheme. We hope that with the years he may become mellower, but that he will never lose the appreciation of "life's more bitter flavours." Insipid novelists are legion. He is Huysmans's little brother in his flair for disintegrating character. But yet an Irishman, who sees the shining vision in the sky, a vision that too often vanishes before he can pin its beauty on canvas. But yet an Irishman in his sense of the murderous humour of such a story as Ivy Day in the Committee-Room, which would bring to a Tammany heeler what Henry James called "the emotion of recognition." Ah! the wild goose. The flying dream.

CHAPTER XVII

CREATIVE INVOLUTION

ISRAEL ZANGWILL, in the papers he contributed once upon a time to the *Strand Magazine* and later reunited in a book bearing the happy title Without Prejudice, spoke of women writers as being significant chiefly in their self-revelation. What they tell of themselves is of more value than what they write about. Whether Mr. Zangwill now believes this matters little in the discussion of an unusual book by a woman. Perhaps to-day he would open both eyes widely after reading Creative Involution, by Cora L. Williams, M.S., with an apposite introduction by Edwin Markham. Miss Williams deals with no less a bagatelle than the Fourth Dimension of Space (what we do not know we fear, and fear is always capitalised). Speculative as is her work, she is not a New-Thoughter, a Christian Scientist, or a member of any of the other queer rag-tag and bobtail beliefs and superstitions — fortune-telling, astrology, selling "futures" in the next life, table-rapping, and such like. Cora Lenore Williams is an authority in mathematics, as was the brilliant, unhappy Sonya Kovalevska. Her ideas, then, are not verbal wind-pudding, but have a basis

of mathematics and the investigations of the laboratory, where "chemists and physicists are finding that the conduct of certain molecules and crystals is best explained as a fourth-dimensional activity."

We have always enjoyed the idea of the Fourth Spatial Dimension. The fact that it is an x in the plotting of mathematicians in general does not hinder it from being a fascinating theme. J. K. F. Zoellner, of Leipsic, proved to his own satisfaction the existence of a Fourth Dimension when he turned an india-rubber ball inside out without tearing it. Later he became a victim to incurable melancholy. No wonder. If you have read Cayley, or Abbot's Flatland, or the ingenious speculations of Simon Newcomb and W. K. Clifford, you will learn the attractions of the subject. Perpetual motion, squaring the circle, are only variants of the alchemical pursuit of the philosopher's stone, the transmutation of the baser metals, the cabalistic Abracadabra, the quest of the absolute. Man can't live on machinery alone, and the underfed soul of the past period of positivism craves more spiritual nourishment to-day. Hasn't the remarkable mathematician Henri Poincaré (author of Science and Hypothesis, The Value of Science, Science and Method) declared that between the construction of the spirit and the absolute of truth there is an abysm caused by free choice and the voluntary elimination which have necessitated

such inferences? Note the word "free"; free-will is restored to its old and honourable estate in the hierarchy of thought. The cast-iron determinism of the seventies and eighties has gone to join the materialistic ideas of Büchner and Clifford. It is a pluralistic world now, and lordly Intuition — a dangerous vocable — rules over mere mental processes. (There is, as George Henry Lewes asserted, profound truth in the Cullen paradox: *i. e.*, there are more false facts than false theories current.) Science only attains the knowledge of the correspondence and relativity of things — no mean intellectual feat, by the way — but not of the things themselves; one must join, adds Poincaré, to the faculty of reasoning the gift of direct sympathy. In a word, Intuition. Even mathematics as an exact science is not immutable, and the geometries of Lebatchevsky and Riemann are as legitimate as Euclid's. And at this point the earth beneath us begins to tremble and the stars to totter in their spheres. Is the age of miracles now?

Perhaps music is in the Fourth Dimension. Time may be in two dimensions. Heraclitus before Bergson compared Time to a river always flowing, yet a permanent river: if we emerged from this stream at a certain moment and entered it an hour later, would it not signify that Time has two dimensions. And where does music stand in the eternal scheme of things? Are not harmony with its vertical structure and melody

with its horizontal flow proof that music is another dimension in Time? Miss Williams's notion of the Fourth Spatial Dimension is a spiritual one. Creative Involution is to supersede the Darwinian evolution. Again, the interior revolution described for our salvation in the epistles of the Apostle Paul. All roads lead to religion. Expel religion forcibly and it returns under strange disguises, usually as debasing superstitions. Yet religion without dogma is like a body without a skeleton — it can't be made to stand upright.

Mathematicians are poets, and religion is the poetry of the poor, just as philosophy is the diversion of professors. Modern science, said Mallock, put out the footlights of life's stage when it denied religion. But matter, in the light of recent experiment, is become spirit, energy, anything but gross matter. Tyndall might have to revise the conclusions of his once famous Belfast address in the presence of radium. Remy de Gourmont said that the essential thing is to search the eternal in the diverse and fleeting movements of form. From a macrocosmic monster our gods are become microcosmic; god may be a molecule, a cell. A god to put in a phial; thus far has the zigzag caprice of theory attained. And religion is "a sum of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties," says Salomon Reinach in Orpheus. Bossuet did not write his Variations in vain. All is vanity, even doctrinal

fluctuations. Goethe has warned us that "Man is not born to solve the mystery of Existence; but he must nevertheless attempt it, in order that he may learn how to keep within the limits of the Knowable." Goethe detested all "thinking about thought." Spinoza was his only philosophical recreation.

Man must no longer be egocentric. The collective soul is born. The psychology of the mob, according to Professor Le Bon, is different from the psychology of the individual. We know this from the mental workings of a jury. Twelve otherwise intelligent men put in a jury-box contaminate each other's will so that their united judgment is, as a rule, that of a full-fledged imbecile. Mark Twain noted this in his accustomed humorous (a mordant humour) fashion, adding that trial by jury was all very well in the time of Alfred the Great, candle-clocks, and small communities. Miss Williams, who sees salvation for the single soul in the collective soul — not necessarily socialistic — nevertheless warns parents against the dangers in our public-school system, where the individuality of the child is so often disturbed, if not destroyed, by class teaching. Mob psychology is always false psychology. The crowd obliterates the ego. Yet to collective consciousness may belong the future. It is all very well for Mallock to call war the glorification, the result, and the prop of limited class interests. (This was years ago.) Stately,

sedate, stable is the class that won't tolerate war; a class of moral lollipops. War we must have; it is one of the prime conditions of struggling existence. As belief in some totem, fetich, taboo is the basis of all superstitions, so the superstition of yesterday builds the cathedrals of faith to-day. (Read Frazer's Golden Bough — James Frazer, who is the Darwin of Social Anthropology.) Happiness requires limitations, as a wine needs a glass to hold it; and if patriotism is a crime of lèse-majesty against mankind, then be it so. But like the poor, war and patriotism are precious essences in the scheme of life, and we shall always have them with us. However, the warning of Miss Williams is a timely one. At school our children's souls are clogged with bricks and mortar, instead of being buoyant and individual.

She quotes—and her little volume contains a mosaic of apt quotations—with evident approbation from Some Neglected Factors in Evolution, by the late H. M. Bernard, an English thinker: "Organic life is thus seen advancing out of the dim past upon a series of waves, each of which can be scanned in detail until we come to that one on which we ourselves, the organisms of to-day, and the human societies to which we belong, are swept onward. Here we must necessarily pause, but can we doubt that the great organic rhythm which has brought life so far will carry it on to still greater heights in the unknown future?"

Rhythm, measured flow, is the shibboleth. Zarathustra tells us that man is a discord and hybrid of plant and ghost. "I teach you Beyond-Man (superman); Man is something that will be surpassed . . . once man was ape, and is ape in a higher degree than any ape. . . . Man is a rope connecting animal and Beyond-Man." "Believe that which thou seest not," cries Flaubert in his marvellous masque of mythologies ancient and modern, The Temptation of St. Anthony. Tertullian said the same centuries before the Frenchman: Believe what is impossible. We all do. Perhaps it is the price we pay for cognition.

Miss Williams is not a Bergsonian, though she appreciates his plastic theories. She has a receptive mind. Henri Bergson is a mystagogue, and all mystagogues are mythomaniacs. He has yet to answer Professor Hugh S. R. Elliott's three questions: "1. Bergson says, 'Time is a stuff both resistant and substantial.' Where is the specimen on which this allegation is founded? 2. Consciousness is to some extent independent of cerebral structure. Professor Bergson thinks he is disproving a crude theory of localisation of mental qualities. Will he furnish evidence of its existence apart from local structure? 3. Instinct leads us to a comprehension of life that intellect can never give. Will Professor Bergson furnish instances of the successes of instinct in biological inquiries where intellect has failed?" (From Modern

Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson, 1912.) These "metaphysical curiosities," as they are rather contemptuously called by Sir Ray Lankester in his preface to this solidly reasoned confutation, are the pabulum of numerous persons, dilettantes, with a craving for an embellished theory of the Grand Perhaps. Miss Williams is not the dupe of such silken sophistries, and while her divagations are sometimes in the air — which, like the earth, hath bubbles, as was observed by the greatest of poets—she plants her feet on tangible affirmations. And to have faith we must admit the Illative sense of John Henry Newman. Thus "the wheel is come full circle." Creative Involution will please mystics and mathematicians alike. The author somersaults in the vasty blue, but safely volplanes to mother earth.

CHAPTER XVIII

FOUR DIMENSIONAL VISTAS

HAMLET, sometime Prince of Denmark, warned his friend that there were more things in heaven and earth than dreamed of in his philosophy. Now, both Hamlet and Horatio had absorbed the contemporary wisdom of Wittenberg. And let it be said in passing that their knowledge did not lag behind ours, metaphysically speaking. Nevertheless, Hamlet, if he had lived longer, might have said that no philosophy would ever solve the riddle of the sphinx; that we never know, only name, things. Noah is the supreme symbol of science, he the first namer of the animals in the ark. The world of sensation is our ark and we are one branch of the animal family. We come whence we know not and go where we shall never guess. Standing on this tiny Isle of Error we call the present, we think backward and live forward. Hamlet the sceptical would now demand something more tangible than the Grand Perhaps. My kingdom for a fulcrum! he might cry to Horatio—on which I may rest my lever and pry this too too solid earth up to the starry skies! What the implement? Religion? Remember Hamlet was

a Catholic, too sensitive to send unshrived to hell's fire the soul of his uncle. Philosophy? Read Jules Laforgue's Hamlet and realise that if he were alive to-day the melancholy Prince might be a delicate scoffer at all fables. A Hamlet who had read Schopenhauer. What then the escape? We all need more elbow-room in the infinite. The answer is—the Fourth Dimension in Higher Space. Eureka!

After studying Saint Teresa, John of the Cross, Saint Ignatius, or the selections in Vaughan's Hours with the Mystics, even the doubting Thomas is forced to admit that here is no trace of rambling discourse, fugitive ideation, half-stammered enigmas; on the contrary, the true mystic abhors the cloudy, and his vision pierces with crystalline clearness the veil of the visible world. As literary style we find sharp contours and affirmations. Mysticism is not all cobweb lace and opal fire. Remember that we are not stressing the validity of either the vision or its consequent judgments; we only wish to emphasise the absence of muddy thinking in these writings. This quality of precision, allied to an eloquent, persuasive style, we encounter in Claude Bragdon's Four Dimensional Vistas. The author is an architect and has written much of his art and of projective ornament. (He was a Scammon lecturer at the Chicago Art Institute in 1915.) He is a mystic. He is also eminently practical. His contribution to æsthetics in The Beautiful

Necessity is suggestive, and on the purely technical side valuable. But Mr. Bragdon, being both a mathematician and a poet, does not stop at three-dimensional existence. Like the profound English mystic William Blake, he could ask: "How do you know but every bird that cuts the airy way is an immense world of delight, closed by your senses five?"

What is the Fourth Dimension? A subtle transposition of precious essences from the earthly to the spiritual plane. We live in a world of three dimensions, the symbols of which are length, breadth, thickness. A species of triangular world, a prison for certain souls who see in the category of Time an escape from that other imperative, Space (however, not the Categorical Imperative of Kant and its acid moral convention). Helmholtz and many mathematicians employed the "n" dimension as a working hypothesis. It is useful in some analytical problems, but it is not apprehended by the grosser senses. Pascal, great thinker and mathematician, had his "Abyss"; it was his Fourth Dimension, and he never walked abroad without the consciousness of it at his side. This illusion or obsession was the result of a severe mental shock early in his life. Many of us are like the French philosopher. We have our "abyss," mystic or real. Mr. Bragdon quotes from the mathematician Bolyai, who in 1823 "declared with regard to Euclid's so-called axiom of parallels,

'I will draw two lines through a given point both of which will be parallel to a given line.'" Space, then, may be curved in another dimension. Mr. Bragdon believes that it is, though he does not attempt to prove it, as that would be impossible; but he gives his readers the chief points in the hypothesis. The "n" dimension may be employed as a lever to the imagination. Even revealed religion demands our faith, and imagination is the prime agent in the interpretation of the universe, according to the gospel of mystic mathematics.

Nature geometrises, said Emerson, and it is interesting to note the imagery of transcendentalism through the ages. It is invariably geometrical. Spheres, planes, cones, circles, spirals, tetragrams, pentagrams, ellipses, and what-not. A cubistic universe. Xenophanes said that God is a sphere. And then there are the geometrical patterns made by birds on the wing. Heaven in any religion is another sphere. Swedenborg offers a series of planes, many mansions for the soul at its various stages of existence. The Bible, the mystical teachings of Mother Church — why evoke familiar witnesses? We are hemmed in by riddles, and the magnificent and mysterious tumult of life asks for the eye of imagination, which is also the eye of faith. The cold fire and dark light of the mystics must not repel us by their strangeness. Not knowledge but perception is power, and the psychic is the sign-post of

the future. What do all these words mean: matter, energy, spirit, cells, molecules, electrons, but the same old thing? I am a colony of cells, yet that fact does not get me closer to the core of the soul. What will? A fourth spatial dimension, answers Claude Bragdon. Truly a poetic concept.

He calls man a space-eater. Human ambition is to annihilate space. Wars are fought for space, and every step in knowledge is based upon its mastery. What miracles are wireless telegraphy, flying-machines, the Roentgen ray! Astronomy — what ghastly gulfs it shows us in space! Time and space were abolished as sense illusions by the worthy Bishop of Cloyne, George Berkeley; but as we are up to our eyes in quotidian life, which grows over and about us like grass, we cannot shake off the oppression. First thought, and then realised, these marvels are now accepted as matter of fact because mankind has been told the technique of them; as if any explanation can be more than nominal. We shall never know the real nature of the phenomena that crowd in on us from lust to dust. Not even that synthesis of the five senses, the sixth, or sex sense, with its evanescent ecstasy, cuts deeply into the darkness. There may be a seventh sense, a new dimension, intimations of which are setting advanced thinkers on fresh trails. But there is as yet no tangible proof. Philosophers, who, like some singers, bray their brainless convic-

tions to a gaping auditory, ask of us much more credence, and little or no imagination. As that "old mole," working in the ground, gravitation, is defied by aeroplanes, then we should not despair of any hypothesis which permits us a peep through the partly opened door. Plato's cavern and the shadows. Who knows but in this universe there may be a crevice through which filters the light of another life? Emerson, who shed systems yet never organised one, hints at aerial perspectives. A flight through the sky with the sun bathing in the blue jolts one's conception of a rigid finite world. In such perilous altitudes I have enjoyed this experience and felt a liberation of the spirit which has no parallel; not even when listening to Bach or Beethoven or Chopin. Music, indeed, is the nearest approach to psychic freedom.

Mr. Bragdon approvingly quotes Goethe's expression "frozen music," applied to Gothic architecture. (Stendhal appropriated this phrase.) For us the flying buttress is aspiring, and the pointed arch is a fugue. Our author is rich in his analogies, and like Sir Thomas Browne sees "quincunxes" in everything; his particular "quincunx" being Higher Space. The precise patterns in our brain, like those of the ant, bee, and beaver, which enable us to perceive and build the universe (otherwise called innate ideas) are geometrical. Space is the first and final illusion. Time — which

is not "a stuff both resistant and substantial," as Henri Bergson declares — is perhaps the Fourth Dimension in the guise of a sequence of states, and not grasped simultaneously, as is the idea of Space. That Time can shrink and expand, opium-eaters, who are not always totally drugged by their dreams, assure us. A second becomes an æon. And space curvature? Is it any wonder that "Lewis Carroll," who wrote those extraordinary parables for little folk, Through the Looking-Glass and Alice in Wonderland, was a mathematician? A topsy-turvy world; it is even upside down as an optical image. The other side of good and evil may be around the corner. Eternity can lurk in a molecule too tiny to harbour Queen Mab. And we may all live to see the back of our own heads without peering in mirrors. That "astral trunk" once so fervently believed in may prove a reality; it is situated behind the ear and is a long tube that ascends to the planet Saturn, and by its aid we should be enabled to converse with spirits! The pineal gland is the seat of the soul, and miracles fence us in at every step. We fill our belly with the east wind of vain desires. We eat the air promise-crammed. This world is but a point in the universe, and our universe only one of an infinite series. There was no beginning, there is no end. Eternity is now; though death and the tax-gatherer never cease their importunings.

All this Mr. Bragdon does not say, though he leans heavily on the arcana of the ancient wisdom. The truth is that the majority of humans are mentally considered vegetables, living in two dimensions. To keep us responsive to spiritual issues, as people were awaked in Swift's Laputa by flappers, is the service performed by such transcendentalists as C. Howard Hinton, author of The Fourth Dimension; Claude Bragdon and Cora Lenore Williams. Their thought is not new; it was hoary with age when the Greeks went to old Egypt for fresh learning; Noah conversed with his wives in the same terminology. But its application is novel, as are the personal nuances. The idea of a fourth spatial dimension may be likened to a fresh lens in the telescope or microscope of speculation. For the present writer the hypothesis is just one more incursion into the fairyland of metaphysics. Without fairies the heart grows old and dusty.

The seven arts are fairy-tales in fascinating shapes. As for the paradise problem, it is horribly sublime for me, this idea of an eternity to be spent in a place which, with its silver, gold, plush, and diamonds, seems like the dream of a retired pawnbroker. The Eternal Recurrence is more consoling. The only excuse for life is its brevity. Why, then, do we yearn for that unending corridor through which in processional rhythms we move, our shoulders bowed by the burden of our chimera — our

ego? I confess that I prefer to watch on the edge of some vast promontory the swift approach of a dark sun rushing out from the primordial depths of interstellar spaces to the celestial assignation made at the beginning of Time for our little solar system, whose provinciality, remote from the populous path of the Milky Way, has hitherto escaped colliding with a segment of the infinite. Perhaps in that apocalyptic flare-up — surely a more cosmical and heroic death than stewing in greasy bliss — Higher Space may be manifested and Time and Tri-Dimensional Space be no more. The rest is silence.

CHAPTER XIX

O. W.

It is an enormous advertisement nowadays to win a reputation as a martyr — whether to an idea, a vice, or a scolding wife. You have a label by which a careless public is able to identify you. Oscar Wilde was a born advertiser. From the sunflower days to Holloway Gaol, and from the gaol to the Virgins of Dieppe, he kept himself in the public eye. Since his death the number of volumes dealing with his glittering personality, negligible verse and more or less insincere prose, have been steadily accumulating; why, I'm at a loss to understand. If he was a victim to British "middle-class morality," then have done with it, while regretting the affair. If he was not, all the more reason to maintain silence. But no, the clamour increases, with the result that there are many young people who believe that Oscar was a great man, a great writer, when in reality he was neither. Here is Alfred Douglas slamming the memory of his old chum in a not particularly edifying manner, though he tells some truths, wholesome and unwholesome. Henley paid an unpleasant tribute to his dead friend, Robert Louis Stevenson, but the note

of hatred was absent; evidently literary depreciation was the object. However, there are many to whom the truth will be more welcome than the spectacle of broken friendship. Another, and far more welcome book, is that written by Martin Birnbaum, a slender volume of "fragments and memories." His Oscar Wilde is the Oscar of the first visit to New York, and there are lots of anecdotes and facts that are sure to please collectors of Wildiana — or Oscariana — which is it? Pictures, too. I confess that his early portraits flatter the Irish writer. "He looked like an old maid in a boarding-house" said a well-known Philadelphia portrait-painter. He was ugly, not a "beautiful Greek god," as his fervent admirers think. His mouth was loose, ill-shaped, his eyes dull and "draggy," his forehead narrow, the cheeks flabby, his teeth protruding and "horsy," his head and face was pear-shaped. He was a big fellow, as was his brother Willie Wilde, who once lived in New York, but he gave no impression of muscular strength or manliness; on the other hand, he was not a "Sissy," as so many have said. Indeed, to know him was to like him; he was the "real stuff," as the slang goes, and if he had only kept away from a pestilential group of flatterers and spongers, his end might have been different.

I've heard many eloquent talkers in my time, best of them all was Barbey d'Aurévilly, of Paris, after whom Oscar palpably modelled —

lace cuffs, clouded cane, and other minor affectations. But when Oscar was in the vein, which was usually once every twenty-four hours, he was inimitable. Edgar Saltus will bear me out in this. For copiousness, sustained wit, and verbal brilliancy the man had few equals. It was amazing, his conversation. I met him when he came here, and once again much later. Possibly that is why I care so little for his verse, a pasticcio of Swinburne — (in the wholly admirable biography of this poet by Mr. Gosse, reference is made to O. W. by the irascible hermit of Putney: "I thought he seemed a harmless young nobody. . . . I should think you in America must be as tired of his name as we are in London of Mr. Barnum's and his Jumbos") — Milton, Tennyson, or for his prose, a dilution of Walter Pater and Flaubert. His Dorian Grey, apart from the inversion element, is poor Huysmans's — just look into that masterpiece, A Rebours; not to mention Poe's tale, The Oval Portrait; while Salomé is Flaubert in operetta form — his gorgeous Herodias watered down for uncritical public consumption. It is safe to say the piece — which limps dramatically — would never have been seriously considered if not for the Richard Strauss musical setting. As for the vaunted essay on Socialism, I may only call attention to one fact, *i. e.*, it does not deal with socialism at all, but with philosophical anarchism; besides, it is not remarkable in

any particular. His Intentions is his best, because his most "spoken" prose. The fairy-tales are graceful exercises by a versatile writer, with an excellent memory, but if I had children I'd give them the Alice in Wonderland books, through which sweeps a bracing air, and not the hothouse atmosphere of Wilde. The plays are fascinating as fireworks, and as remote from human interest. Perhaps I'm in error, yet, after reading Pater, Swinburne, Rossetti, Huysmans, I prefer them to the Wilde imitations, strained as they are through his very gay fancy.

He wasn't an evil-minded man; he posed à la Byron and Baudelaire; but to hear his jolly laughter was to rout any notion of the morbid or the sinister. He was materialistic, he loved good cookery, old wines, and strong tobacco. Positively the best book Wilde ever inspired was The Green Carnation, by Robert Hichens, which book gossip avers set the ball rolling that fetched up behind prison-bars. In every-day life he was a charming, companionable, and very human chap, and, as Frederick James Gregg says, dropped more witty epigrams in an hour than Whistler did annually. The best thing Whistler ever said to Wilde was his claiming in advance as his own anything Oscar might utter; and here Whistler was himself borrowing an epigram of Baudelaire, as he borrowed from the same source and amplified the idea that nature is monotonous, nature is a plagia-

rist from art, and all the rest of such paradoxical chatter and inconsequent humour. Both Whistler and Wilde have been taken too seriously — I mean on this side. Whistler was a great artist. Wilde was not. Whistler discoursed wittily, waspishly, but he wasn't knee-high to a grasshopper when confronted with Wilde. As for the tragic dénouement that has been thrashed to death by those who know, suffice to add that William Butler Yeats told me that he called at the Wilde home after the scandal had broken, and saw Willie Wilde, who roundly denounced his brother for his truly brave attitude — always attitudes with Oscar. He would not be persuaded to leave London, and perhaps it was the wisest act of his life, though neither the Ballad of Reading Gaol nor De Profundis carry conviction. Need I say that my judgment is personal? I have read in cold type that Pater was a "forerunner" of Wilde; that Wilde is a second Jesus Christ — which latter statement stuns one. (The Whitmaniacs are fond of claiming the same for Walt, who is not unlike that silly and sinister monster described by Rabelais as quite overshadowing the earth with its gigantic wings, and after dropping vast quantities of mustard-seed on the embattled hosts below flew away yawping: "Carnival, Carnival, Carnival!") For me, he simply turned into superior "journalism" the ideas of Swinburne, Pater, Flaubert, Huysmans, De Quincey, and others. If his readers

would only take the trouble to study the originals there might be less talk of his "originality." I say all this without any disparagements of his genuine gifts; he was a born newspaper man. Henry James calls attention to the fact that the so-called æsthetic movement in England never flowered into anything so artistically perfect as the novels of Gabriel d'Annunzio. Which is true; but he could have joined to the name of the Italian poet and playwright that of Aubrey Beardsley, the one "genius" of the "Eighteen-Nineties." Beardsley gave us something distinctly individual. Wilde, a veritable cabotin, did not — nothing but his astounding conversation, and that, alas! is a fast fading memory.

CHAPTER XX

A SYNTHESIS OF THE SEVEN ARTS

NOTHING new in all this talk about a fusion of the Seven Arts; it has been tried for centuries. Richard Wagner's attempt just grazed success, though the æsthetic principle at the base of his theory is eminently unsound. Pictures, sculpture, tone, acting, poetry, and the rest are to be found in the Wagnerian music-drama; but the very titles are significant — a hybrid art is there. With Wagner music is the master. His poetry, his drama, are not so important, though his scenic sense is unfailing. Every one of his works delights the eye; truly moving pictures. Yet if the lips of the young man of Urbino had opened to music, they would have sung the melodies of the young man of Salzburg. Years ago Sadikichi Hartmann, the Japanese poet from Hamburg, made a bold attempt in this direction, adding to other ingredients of the sensuous stew, perfume. The affair came off at Carnegie Hall, and we were wafted on the wings of song and smell to Japan — only I detected the familiar odour of old shoes and the scent of armpits — of the latter Walt Whitman has triumphantly sung. A New York

audience is not as pleasant to the nostrils as a Japanese crowd. That Mr. Finck has assured us. In the Théâtre d'art, Paris, and in the last decade of the last century, experiments were made with all the arts — except the art of the palate. Recently, Mary Hallock, a Philadelphia pianist, has invented a mixture of music, lights, and costumes; for instance, in a certain Debussy piece, the stage assumes a deep violet hue, which glides into a light purple. The Turkish March of Mozart is depicted in deep "reds, yellows, and greens." Philip Hale, the Boston music-critic, has written learnedly on the relation of tones and colours, and that astonishing poet, Arthur Rimbaud, in his Alchimie du Verbe, tells us: "I believe in all the enchantments. I invented the colour of the vowels: A, black; E, white; I, red; O, blue; U, green." This scheme he set forth in his famous sonnet, Voyelles, which was only a mystification to catch the ears of credulous ones. René de Ghil invented an entirely new system of prosody, which no one understood; least of all, the poet. I wrote a story, The Piper of Dreams (in Melomaniacs), to prove that music and the violet rays combined might prove deadly in the hands of an anarch composer like Illowski — or Richard Strauss. And now New York has enjoyed its first Light Symphony, by Alexander Scriabine. It was played by the Russian Symphony Orchestra under the suave conductorship of Modeste Altschuler (who is so Jacobean), while

his brother Jacob (who is so modest) sat at the keyboard and pressed down the keys which regulated the various tintings on a screen; a wholly superfluous proceeding, as the colours did not mollify the truculence of the score; indeed, were quite meaningless, though not optically unpleasant. I admired this Russian, Scriabine, ever since I heard Josef Hofmann play a piano of his étude in D sharp minor. Chopinesque, very, but a decided personality was also shown in it. I've heard few of his larger orchestral works. Nevertheless, I did not find Prometheus as difficult of comprehension as either Schoenberg or Ornstein. Judged purely on the scheme set by its composer, I confess I enjoyed its chaotic beauties and passionate twaddle, and singular to relate, the music was best when it recalled Wagner and Chopin (a piano part occasionally sounded bilious premonitions of Chopin). But, for such a mighty theme as Prometheus, the Light-Bringer (a prehistoric Ben Franklin without his electrified kite), the leading motives of this new music were often undersized. The dissociation of conventional keys was rigorously practised, and at times we were in the profoundest gulfs of cacophony. But the scoring evoked many novel effects; principally, Berlioz and vodka. I still think Scriabine a remarkable composer, if not much addicted to the languishing Lydian mode. But his Light Symphony proved to be only a partial solution of the problem. In

Paris the poet Haraucourt and Ernest Eckstein invented puppet-shows with perfume symphonies.

A quarter of a century ago I visited the Théâtre d'art, in Paris; that is, my astral soul did, for in those times I was a confirmed theosophist. The day had been a stupid one in Gotham, and I hadn't enough temperament to light a cigarette, so I simply pressed the nombril button, took my Rig-Veda — a sacred buggy — projected my astral being, and sailed through space to the French capital, there to enjoy a bath in the new art, or synthesis of the seven arts, eating included. As it was a first performance, even the police were deprived of their press-tickets, and the deepest mystery was maintained by the experimenters. I found the theatre, soon after my arrival, plunged into an orange gloom, punctured by tiny balls of violet light, which daintily and intermittently blinked. The dominant odour of the atmosphere was Cologne-water, with a florid counterpoint that recalled bacon and eggs, a mélange that appealed to my nostrils; and, though at first it seems hardly possible that the two dissimilar odours could even be made to modulate and merge, yet I had not been indoors ten minutes before the subtlety of the duet was apparent. Bacon has a delicious smell, and, like a freshly cut lemon, it causes a premonitory tickling of the palate and little rills of hunger in one's stomach. "Aha!" I cried

(astrally, of course), "this is a concatenation of the senses never dreamed of by Plato when he conceived the plan of his Republic."

The lanquid lisp of those assembled in the theatre drifted into little sighs, and then a low, long-drawn-out chord in B flat minor, scored for octoroons, octopuses, shofars, tympani, and piccolo, sounded. Immediately a chorus of male soprani blended with this chord, though they sang the common chord of A major. The effect was one of vividity (we say "avidity," why can't we say "vividity"?); it was a dissonance, pianissimo, and it jarred my ears in a way that made their drums warble. Then a low burbling sound ascended. "The bacon frying," I cried, but I was mistaken. It was caused by the hissing of a sheet of carmilion (that is carmine and vermilion) smoke which slowly upraised on the stage; as it melted away the lights in the auditorium turned green and topaz, and an odour of jasmine and stewed tomatoes encircled us. My immediate neighbours seemed to be swooning; they were nearly prostrate, with their lips glued to the rod that ran around the seats. I grasped it, and received a most delicious thrill, probably electrical in origin, though it was velvety pleasure merely to touch it, and the palms of my hands exquisitely ached. "The tactile motive," I said. As I touched the rod I noted a small mouthpiece, and thinking I might hear something, I applied my ear; it instantly became wet. So

evidently it was not the use to which it should be put. Again inspecting this mouthpiece, I put my finger to it and cautiously raised the moist end to my lips. "Heavenly!" I murmured. What sort of an earthly paradise was I in? And then losing no time, I placed my astral lips to the orifice, and took a long pull. Gorgeous was the result. Gumbo soup, as sure as I ever ate it, not your pusillanimous New York variety, but the genuine okra soup that one can't find outside of Louisiana, where old negro mammies used to make it to perfection. "The soup motive," I exclaimed.

Just as I gurgled the gumbo nocturne down my thirsty throat, a shrill burst of brazen clangour (this is not tautological) in the orchestra roused me from my dream, and I gazed on the stage. The steam had cleared away, and now showed a rocky and wooded scene, the trees sky-blue, the rocks a Nile-green. The band was playing something that sounded like a strabismic version of the prelude to Tristan. But strange odour-harmonies disturbed my enjoyment of the music, for so subtly allied were the senses in this new temple of art that a separate smell, taste, touch, vision, or sound jarred the ensemble. This uncanny interfusion of the arts took my breath away, but, full of gumbo soup as I was — and you have no idea how soup discommodes the astral stomach — I was anchored to my seat, and bravely determined not to leave till I had some

clew to the riddle of the new evangel of the seven — or seventeen — arts. The stage remained bare, though the rocks, trees, and shrubbery changed their hues about every twenty seconds. At last, as a blazing colour hit my tired eyeballs, and when the odour had shifted to decayed fish, dried grapefruit, and new-mown hay, I could stand it no longer, and, turning to my neighbour, I tapped him on the shoulder, and politely asked: "Monsieur, will you please tell me the title of this play, piece, drama, morceau, stueck, sonata, odour, picture, symphony, cooking-comedy, or whatever they call it?" The young man to whom I had appealed looked fearfully about him — I had foolishly forgotten that I was invisible in my astral shape — then clutched at his windpipe, beat his silly skull, and screamed aloud: "Mon Dieu! still another kind of aural pleasure," and was carried out in a superbly vertiginous fit. Fright had made him mad. The spectators were too absorbed, or drugged, to pay attention to the incident. Followed a slow, putrid silence.

Realising the folly of addressing humans in my astral garb, I sat down in my corner and again watched the stage. Still no trace of actors. The scenery had faded into a dullish dun hue, while the orchestra played a Bach fugue for oboe, lamp-post (transposed to E flat and two policemen) accordions in F and stopped-strumpets. Suddenly the lights went

out, and we were plunged into a blackness that actually pinched the sight, so drear, void, and dead was it. A smell of garlic made us cough, and by a sweep of some current we were saturated with the odours of white violets, the lights were tuned in three keys: yellow of eggs, marron glacé, and orchids, and the soup supply shifted to whisky-sours. "How delicate these contrasts!" hiccoughed my neighbour, and I astrally acquiesced. Then, at last, the stage became peopled by one person, a very tall old man with three eyes, high heels, and a deep voice. Brandishing aloft his whiskers, he curiously muttered: "And hast thou slain the Jabberwock? Come to my arms my beamish boy." Alice in Wonderland, was the mystery-play, and I had arrived too late to witness the slaying of the monster in its many-buttoned waistcoat. How gallantly the "beamish boy" must have dealt the death-stroke to the queer brute as the orchestra sounded the Siegfried and the Dragon motives, and the air all the while redolent with heliotrope. I couldn't help wondering what the particular potage was at this crucial moment. My cogitation was interrupted by the appearance of a gallant-appearing young knight in luminous armour, who dragged after him a huge carcass, half-dragon and two-thirds pig (the other three-thirds must have been suffering from stage fright). The orchestra proclaimed the Abattoir motive, and instantly rose-odours penetrated

the air, the electric shocks ceased, and subtle little kicks were administered to the audience, which, by this time, was well-nigh swooning with these composite pleasures. The scenery had begun to dance gravely to an odd Russian rhythm, and the young hero monotonously intoned a verse, making the vowel sounds sizzle with his teeth, and almost swallowing the consonants: "And as in uffish thought he stood, the Jabberwock, with eyes of flame, came whiffling through the tulgey wood, and burbled as it came." "This beats Gertrude Stein," I thought, as the orchestra played the Galumphing motive from The Ride of the Valkyrs, and the lights were transposed to a shivering purple. Then lilac steam ascended, the orchestra gasped in C-D flat major (for corno di bassetto and three yelping poodles), a smell of cigarettes and coffee permeated the atmosphere, and I knew that this magical banquet of the senses was concluded. I was not sorry, as every nerve was sore from the strain imposed. Talk about faculty of attention! When you are forced to taste, see, hear, touch, and smell simultaneously, then you yearn for a less alembicated art. Synthesis of the arts? Synthesis of rubbish! One at a time, and not too much time at that. I pressed my astral button, and flew homeward, wearily, slowly; I was full of soup and tone, and my ears and nostrils quivered from exhaustion. When I landed at the Battery it was exactly five o'clock.

A SYNTHESIS OF THE SEVEN ARTS

It had stopped snowing, and an angry sun was preparing to bathe for the night in the wet of the western sky. New Jersey was etched against a cold hard background, and as an old hand-organ struck up It's a Long, Long Way to Retrograd, I threw my cap in the air and joined in (astrally, but joyfully) the group of ragged children who danced around the venerable organist with jeers and shouting. After all, life is greater than the Seven Arts.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CLASSIC CHOPIN

THAT Chopin is a classic need not be unduly insisted upon; he is classic in the sense of representing the best in musical literature; but that he is of a classical complexion as a composer from the beginning of his career may seem in the nature of a paradox. Nevertheless, it is a thesis that can be successfully maintained now, since old party lines have been effaced. To battle seriously for such words as Classic or Romantic or Realism is no longer possible. Cultured Europe did so for a century, as it once wrangled over doctrinal points; as if the salvation of mankind depended upon the respective verbal merits of transubstantiation or consubstantiation. Only yesterday that ugly word "degeneracy," thanks to quack critics and charlatan "psychiatrists," figured as a means of estimating genius. This method has quite vanished among reputable thinkers, though it has left behind it another misunderstood vocable — decadence. Wagner is called decadent. So is Chopin. While Richard Strauss is held up as the prime exponent of musical decadence. What precisely is decadent? Says Havelock Ellis:

"Technically, a decadent style is only such

in relation to a classic style. It is simply a further development of a classic style, a further specialisation, the homogeneous, in Spencerian phraseology, having become heterogeneous. The first is beautiful because the parts are subordinated to the whole; the second is beautiful because the whole is subordinated to the parts. . . . Swift's prose is classic, Pater's decadent. . . . Roman architecture is classic, to become in its Byzantine developments completely decadent, and Saint Mark's is the perfected type of decadence in art; pure early Gothic, again, is strictly classic in the highest degree because it shows an absolute subordination of detail to the bold harmonies of structure, while the later Gothic . . . is decadent. . . . All art is the rising and falling of the slopes of a rhythmic curve between these two classic and decadent extremes."

I make this quotation for it clearly sets forth a profound but not widely appreciated fact. In art, as in life, there is no absolute. Perhaps the most illuminating statement concerning the romantic style was uttered by Théophile Gautier. Of it he wrote (in his essay on Baudelaire): "Unlike the classic style it admits shadow." We need not bother ourselves about the spirit of romanticism; that has been done to the death by hundreds of critics. And it is a sign of the times that the old-fashioned Chopin is fading, while we are now vitally interested in him as a formalist. Indeed, Chopin

the romantic, poetic, patriotic, sultry, sensuous, morbid, and Chopin the pianist, need not enter into our present scheme. He has appeared to popular fancy as everything from Thaddeus of Warsaw to an exotic drawing-room hero; from the sentimental consumptive consoled by countesses to the accredited slave of George Sand. All this is truly the romantic Chopin. It is the obverse of the medal that piques curiosity. Why the classic quality of his compositions, their clarity, concision, purity, structural balance, were largely missed by so many of his contemporaries is a mystery. Because of his obviously romantic melodies he was definitely ranged with the most extravagant of the romantics, with Berlioz, Schumann, Liszt; but, as a matter of fact, he is formally closer to Mendelssohn. His original manner of distributing his thematic material deceived the critics. He refused to join the revolutionists; later in the case of Flaubert we come upon an analogous condition. Hailed as chief of the realists, the author of Madame Bovary took an ironic delight in publishing Salammbô, which was romantic enough to please that prince of romanticists, Victor Hugo. Chopin has been reproached for his tepid attitude toward romanticism, and also because of his rather caustic criticisms of certain leaders. He, a musical aristocrat *pur sang*, held aloof, though he permitted himself to make some sharp commentaries on Schubert, Schumann, and Berlioz.

Decidedly not a romantic despite his romantic externalism. Decidedly a classic despite his romantic "content." Of him Stendhal might have written: a classic is a dead romantic. (Heine left no epic, yet he is an indubitable classic.) Wise Goethe said: "The point is for a work to be thoroughly good and then it is sure to be classical."

But it is not because of the classicism achieved by the pathos of distance that Chopin's special case makes an appeal. It is Chopin as a consummate master of music that interests us. In his admirable Chopin the Composer, Edgar Stillman Kelley considers Chopin and puts out of court the familiar "gifted amateur," "improvisatore of genius," and the rest of the theatrical stock description by proving beyond peradventure of a doubt that Frédéric François Chopin was not only a creator of new harmonies, inventor of novel figuration, but also a musician skilled in the handling of formal problems, one grounded in the schools of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven; furthermore, that if he did not employ the sonata form in its severest sense, he literally built on it as a foundation. He managed the rondo with ease and grace, and if he did not write fugues it was because the fugue form did not attract him. Perhaps the divination of his own limitations is a further manifestation of his extraordinary genius. This does not imply that Chopin had any particular genius in counterpoint, but to deny his mastery

of polyphony is a grave error. And it is still denied with the very evidence staring his critics in the face. Beethoven in his sonatas demonstrated his individuality, though coming after Mozart's perfect specimens in that form. Chopin did not try to bend the bow of Ulysses, though more than a word might be said of his two last Sonatas — the first is boyishly pedantic, and monotonous in key-contrast, while the 'cello and piano sonata hardly can be ranked as an exemplar of classic form.

Of the Etudes Kelley says:

"In this group of masterpieces we find the more desirable features of the classical school — diatonic melodies, well-balanced phrase and period-building — together with the richness afforded by chromatic harmonies and modulatory devices heretofore unknown."

Indeed, a new system of music that changed the entire current of the art. It was not without cause that I once called Chopin the "open door"; through his door the East entered and whether for good or for ill certainly revolutionised Western music. Mr. Hadow is right in declaring that "Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, are not as far from each other as the music of 1880 from that of 1914." And Chopin was the most potent influence, in company with Beethoven and Wagner, in bringing about that change. I say in company with Beethoven and Wagner, for I heartily agree with Frederick Niecks in his recent judgment:

"I consider Chopin to be one of the three most powerful factors in the development of nineteenth-century music, the other two being, of course, Beethoven and Wagner. The absolute originality of Chopin's personality, and that of its expression through novel harmony, chromaticism, figuration justifies the assertion. And none will deny the fact who takes the trouble to trace the Polish master's influence on his contemporaries and successors. The greatest and most powerful composers came under this influence, to a large extent, by the process of infiltration."

Kelley gives us chapter and verse in the particular case of Wagner and his absorption of the harmonic schemes of Chopin, as did the late Anton Seidl many times for my particular benefit.

However, this only brings us to Chopin the innovator, whereas it is the aspect of the classic Chopin which has been neglected. "As far back as 1840 Chopin was employing half-tones with a freedom that brought upon him the wrath of conservative critics," writes Hadow, who admires the Pole with reservations, not placing him in such august company as has Kelley and Niecks. True, Chopin was a pioneer in several departments of his art, yet how few recognised or recognise to-day that Schumann is the more romantic composer of the pair; his music is a very jungle of romantic formlessness; his Carneval the epitome of romantic musical

portraiture — with its "Chopin" more Chopin than the original. Contrast the noble Fantasy in C, Opus 17 of Schumann, with the equally noble Fantasy in F minor, Opus 49 of Chopin, and ask which is the more romantic in spirit, structure, and technique. Unquestionably to Schumann would be awarded the quality of romanticism. He is more fantastic, though his fantasy is less decorative; he strays into the most delightful and umbrageous paths and never falters in the preservation of romantic atmosphere. Now look on the other picture. There is Chopin, who, no matter his potentialities, never experimented in the larger symphonic mould, and as fully imbued with the poetic spirit as Schumann; nevertheless a master of his patterns, whether in figuration or general structure. His Mazourkas are sonnets, and this Fantasy in F minor is, as Kelley points out, a highly complex rondo; as are the Ballades and Scherzos. Beethoven, doubtless, would have developed the eloquent main theme more significantly; strictly speaking, Chopin introduces so much new melodic material that the rondo form is greatly modified, yet never quite banished. The architectonics of the composition are more magnificent than in Schumann, although I do not propose to make invidious comparisons. Both works are classics in the accepted sense of the term. But Chopin's Fantasy is more classic in structure and sentiment.

The Sonatas in B flat minor and B minor are

"awful examples" for academic theorists. They are not faultless as to form and do sadly lack organic unity. Schumann particularly criticises the Sonata Opus 35 because of the inclusion of the Funeral March and the homophonic, "invertebrate" finale. But the two first movements are distinct contributions to Sonata literature, even if in the first movement the opening theme is not recapitulated. I confess that I am glad it is not, though the solemn title "Sonata" becomes thereby a mockery. The composer adequately treats this first motive in the development section so that its absence later is not annoyingly felt. There are, I agree with Mr. Kelley, some bars that are surprisingly like a certain page of Die Götterdämmerung, as the Feuerzauber music may be noted in the flickering chromaticism of the E minor Concerto; or as the first phrase of the C minor Etude, Opus 10, No. 12, is to be found in Tristan and Isolde — Isolde's opening measure, "Wer wagt mich zu höhnen." (The orchestra plays the identical Chopin phrase.) This first movement of the B flat minor Sonata — with four bars of introduction, evidently suggested by the sublime opening of Beethoven's C minor Sonata, Opus 111, does not furnish us with as concrete an example as the succeeding Scherzo in E flat minor, (for me) one of the most perfect examples of Chopin's exquisite formal sense. While it is not as long-breathed as the C sharp minor Scherzo, its

concision makes it more tempting to the student. In character stormier than the Scherzo, Opus 39, its thematic economy and development — by close parallelism of phraseology, as Hadow points out — reveal not only a powerful creative impulse, but erudition of the highest order. No doubt Chopin did improvise freely, did come easily by his melodies, but the travail of a giant in patience — again you think of Flaubert — is shown in the polishing of his periods. He is a poet who wrote perfect pages.

The third Scherzo, less popular but of deeper import than the one in B flat minor, is in spirit splenetic, ironical, and passionate, yet with what antithetic precision and balance the various and antagonistic moods are grasped and portrayed. And every measure is logically accounted for. The automatism inherent in all passage work he almost eliminated, and he spiritualised ornament and arabesque. It is the triumph of art over temperament. No one has ever accused Chopin of lacking warmth; indeed, thanks to a total misconception of his music, he is tortured into a roaring tornado by sentimentalists and virtuosi. But if he is carefully studied it will be seen that he is greatly preoccupied with form — his own form, be it understood — and that the linear in nearly all of his compositions takes precedence over colour. I know this sounds heretical. But while I do not yield an iota in my belief that Chopin is the most poetic among composers

(as Shelley is among poets, and Vermeer is the painter's painter) it is high time that he be viewed from a different angle. The versatility of the man, his genius as composer and pianist, the novelty of his figuration and form dazzled his contemporaries or else blinded them to his true import. Individual as are the six Scherzos — two of them are in the Sonatas — they nevertheless stem from classic soil; the scherzo is not new with him, nor are its rhythms. But the Ballades are Chopinesque to the last degree, with their embellished thematic cadenzas, modulatory motives, richly decorated harmonic designs, and their incomparable "content"; above all, in their amplification of the coda, a striking extension of the postlude, making it as pregnant with meaning as the main themes. The lordly flowing narration of the G minor Ballade; the fantastic wavering outlines of the second Ballade — which on close examination exhibits the firm burin of a masterful etcher; the beloved third Ballade, a formal masterpiece; and the F minor Ballade, most elaborate and decorative of the set — are there, I ask, in all piano literature such original compositions? The four Impromptus are mood pictures, highly finished, not lacking boldness of design, and in the second, F sharp major, there are fertile figurative devices and rare harmonic treatment. The melodic organ-point is original. Polyphonic complexity is to be found in some of the Mazourkas. Ehlert

mentions a "perfect canon in the octave" in one of them (C sharp minor, Opus 63).

Of the Concertos there is less to be said, for the conventional form was imposed by the title. Here Chopin is not the Greater Chopin, notwithstanding the beautiful music for the solo instrument. The sonata form is not desperately evaded, and in the rondo of the E minor Concerto he overtops Hummel on his native heath. As to the instrumentation I do not believe Chopin had much to do with it; it is the average colourless scoring of his day. Nor do I believe with some of his admirers that he will bear transposition to the orchestra, or even to the violin. It does not attenuate the power and originality of his themes that they are essentially of the piano. A song is for the voice and is not bettered by orchestral arrangement. The same may be said of the classic concertos for violin. With all due respect for those who talk about the Beethoven Sonatas being "orchestral," I only ask, Why is it they sound so "unorchestral" when scored for the full battery of instruments? The Sonata Pathétique loses its character thus treated. So does the A flat Polonaise of Chopin, heroic as are its themes. Render unto the keyboard that which is composed for it. The Appassionata Sonata in its proper medium is as thrilling as the Eroica Symphony. The so-called "orchestral test" is no test at all; only a confusion of terms and of artistic substances. Chopin thought for

the piano; he is the greatest composer for the piano; by the piano he stands or falls. The theme of the grandiose A minor Etude (Opus 25, No. 11) is a perfect specimen of his invention; yet it sounds elegiac and feminine when compared with the first tragic theme of Beethoven's C minor Symphony.

The Allegro de Concert, Opus 46, is not his most distinguished work, truncated concerto as it is, but it proves that he could fill a larger canvas than the Valse. In the Mazourkas and Etudes he is closer to Bach than elsewhere. His early training under Elsner was sound and classical. But he is the real Chopin when he goes his own way, a fiery poet, a bold musician, but also a refined, tactful temperament, despising the facile, the exaggerated, and bent upon achieving a harmonious synthesis. Truly a classic composer in his solicitude for contour, and chastity of style. The Slav was tempered by the Gallic strain. Insatiable in his dreams, he fashioned them into shapes of enduring beauty.

You would take from us the old Chopin, the greater Chopin, the dramatic, impassioned poet-improvisatore, I hear some cry! Not in the least. Chopin is Chopin. He sings, even under the fingers of pedants, and to-day is butchered in the classroom to make a holiday for theorists. Nevertheless, he remains unique. Sometimes the whole in his work is subordinated to the parts, sometimes the parts are subordi-

nated to the whole. The romantic "shadow" is there, also the classic structure. Again let me call your attention to the fact that if he had not juggled so mystifyingly with the sacrosanct tonic and dominant, had not distributed his thematic material in a different manner from the prescribed methods of the schools, he would have been cheerfully, even enthusiastically, saluted by his generation. But, then, we should have lost the real Chopin.

CHAPTER XXII

LITTLE MIRRORS OF SINCERITY

BARNEY IN THE BOX-OFFICE

First Scene. It is snowing on the Strand. Not an American actor is in sight, though voices are wafted occasionally from the bar of the Savoy (remember this is a play, and the unusual is bound to happen). In front of the newly built Theatre of Arts, Shaw, and Science, two figures stand as if gazing at the brilliantly lighted façade. The doors are wide open, a thin and bearded man sits smiling and talking to himself in the box-office. His whiskers are as sandy as his wit. The pair outside regard him suspiciously. Both are tiny fellows, one clean-shaven, the other wearing elaborately arranged hair on his face. They are the two Maxes — Nordau and Birnbaum. Says Nordau:

"Isn't that Bernard in the booking-office?" "By jove, it is, let's go in." "Hasn't he a new play on?" "I can't say. I'm only a critic of the drayma." "No cynicism, Maxixe," urges Nordau. They approach. In unanimous flakes the snow falls. It is very cold. Cries Bernard on recognising them:

"Hi there, skip! To-night free list is sus-

pended. I'm giving my annual feast in the Cave of Culture of the modern idols, in one scene. No one may enter, least of all you, Nordau, or you, Sir Critic." "Why, what's up, George?" asks in a pleading mid-Victorian timbre the little Maxixe. "Back to the woods, both of you!" commands George, who has read both Mark Twain and Oliver Herford. "Besides," he confidentially adds, "you surely don't wish to go to a play in which your old friends Ibsen and Nietzsche are to be on view." "On view!" quoth the author of Degeneration. "Yes, visible on a short furlough from Sheol, for one night only. My benefit. Step up, ladies and gentlemen. A few seats left. The greatest show on earth. I'm in it. Lively, please!" A mob rushes in. The two Maxes fade into the snow, but in the eyes of one there is a malicious glitter. "I'm no Maxixe," he murmurs, "if I can't get into a theatre without paying." Nordau doesn't heed him. They part. The night closes in, and only the musical rattle of bangles on a naughty wrist is heard.

Second Scene. On the stage of the theatre there are two long tables. The scene is set as if for a banquet. The curtain is down. Some men walk about conversing — some calmly, some feverishly. Several are sitting. The lighting is feeble. However, may be discerned familiar figures; Victor Hugo solemnly speaking to Charles Baudelaire — who shivers (un nouveau frisson); Flaubert in a corner roaring

at Sainte-Beuve — the old row over Salammbô is on again. Richard Strauss is pulling at the velvet coat-tails of Richard Wagner, without attracting his attention. The Master, in company with nearly all the others, is staring at a large clock against the back drop. "Listen for the Parsifal chimes," he says, delight playing over his rugged features. "Ape of the ideal," booms a deep voice hard by. It is that of Nietzsche, whose moustaches droop in Polish cavalier style.

"Batiushka! If those two Dutchmen quarrel over the virility of Parsifal I'm going away." The speaker is Tolstoy, attired in his newest Moujik costume, top-boots and all. In his left hand he holds a spade. "To table, gentlemen!" It is the jolly voice of the Irish Ibsen, G. B. S. Lights flare up. Without is heard the brumming of the audience, an orchestra softly plays motives from Pelléas et Mélisande. Wagner wipes his spectacles, and Maurice Maeterlinck crushes a block of Belgian oaths between his powerful teeth. But Debussy doesn't appear to notice either man. He languidly strikes his soup-spoon on a silver salt-cellar and immediately jots down musical notation. "The correspondences of nuances," he sings to his neighbour, who happens to be Whistler. "The correspondence of fudge," retorts James. "D'ye think I'm interested in wall-paper music? Oh, Lil'libulero!" All are now seated. With his accustomed lingual dex-

terity Mr. Shaw says grace, calling down a blessing upon the papier-mâché fowls and the pink stage-tea, from what he describes as a gaseous invertebrate god — he has read Haeckel — and winds up with a few brilliant heartless remarks:

"I wish you gentlemen, ghosts, idols, gods, and demigods, alive or dead, to remember that you are assembled here this evening to honour me. Without me, and my books and plays, you would, all of you, be dead in earnest — dead literature as well as dead bones. As for the living, I'll have a shy at you some day. I'm not fond of Maeterlinck. ["Hear, hear!" comes from Debussy's mystic beard.] As for you, Maurice, I can beat you hands down at bettering Shakespeare, and, for Richard Strauss — well, I've never tried orchestration, but I'm sure I'd succeed as well as you ——"

"Oh, please, won't some one give me a roast-beef sandwich? In Russia I daren't eat meat on account of my disciples there and in England —" It is Tolstoy who speaks. Shaw fixes him with an indignant look, he, the prince of vegetarians: "Give him some salt, he needs salting." In tears, Tolstoy resumes his reading of the confessions of Huysmans. The band, on the other side of the curtain, swings into the Kaisermarch. "Stop them! Stop it!" screams Wagner. I'm a Social-Democrat now. I wrote that march when I was a Monarchist." This was the chance for Nietzsche. Drawing up his

tall, lanky figure, he began: "You mean, Herr Geyer — to give you your real name — you wrote it for money. You mean, Richard Geyer, that you cut your musical coat to suit your snobbish cloth. You mean, the Wagner you never were, that you wrote your various operas — which you call music-dramas — to flatter your various patrons. Parsifal for the decadent King Ludwig ——"

"Pardieu! this is too much." Manet's blond beard wagged with rage. "Have we assembled this night to fight over ancient treacheries, or are we met to do honour to the only man in England, and an Irishman at that, who, in his plays, has kept alive the ideas of Ibsen, Nietzsche, Wagner? As for me, I don't need such booming. I'm a modest man. I'm a painter." "Hein! You a painter!" Sitting alone, Gérôme discloses spiteful intonations in his voice. "Yes, a painter," hotly replies Manet. "And I'm in the Louvre, my Olympe —" "All the worse for the Louvre," sneers Gérôme. The two men would have been at each other's throats if some one from the Land of the Midnight Whiskers hadn't intervened. It was Henrik Ibsen.

"Children," he remarks, in a strong Norwegian brogue, "please to remember my dignity if not your own. Long before Max Stirner —" Nietzsche interrupted: "There never was such a person." Ibsen calmly continued, "I wrote that 'my truth is the truth.' And when

I see such so-called great men acting like children, I regret having left my cool tomb in Norway. But where are the English dramatists, our confrères? Ask the master of the revels." Ibsen sat down. Shaw pops in his head at a practicable door.

"Who calls?"

"We wish to know why our brethren, the English playwrights, are not bidden to meet us?" said Maeterlinck, after gravely bowing to Ibsen. Smiling beatifically, Saint Bernard replied:

"Because there ain't no sich thing as an English dramatist. The only English dramatist is Irish." He disappears. Ensues a lively argument. "He may be right," exclaims Maeterlinck," yet I seem to have heard of Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, Barrie — well, I'll have to ask the trusty A. B. C. Z. Walkley." "And the Americans?" cries Ibsen, who is annoyed because Richard Strauss persists in asking for a symphonic scenario of Peer Gynt. "I'm sure," the composer complains, "Grieg will be forgotten if I write new incidental music for you." Ibsen looks at him sourly.

"American dramatists, or do you mean American millionaires?" Manet interpolated. "No, I fancy he means the American painters who imitate my pictures, making them better than the originals, and also getting better prices than I did."

"What envy! what slandering! what envious

feelings!" sighs Nietzsche. "If my doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence of all things sublunary is a reality, then I shall be sitting with these venomous spiders, shall be in this identical spot a trillion of years hence. Oh, horrors! Why was I born?"

"Divided tones," argues Manet, clutching Whistler by his carmilion necktie, "are the only —" Suddenly Shaw leaps on the stage.

"Gentlemen, gods, ghosts, idols, I've bad news for you. Max Nordau is in the audience." "Nordau!" wails every one. Before the lights could be extinguished the guests were under the table. "No taking chances," whispers Nietzsche. "Quoi donc! who is this Nordau — a spy of Napoleon's?" demands Hugo, in bewildered accents. For answer, Baudelaire shivers and intones: "O Poe, Poe! O Edgar Poe." Silence so profound that one hears the perspiration drop from Wagner's massive brow.

Third Scene. It still snows without. Max, the only Nordau, stands in silent pride. He is alone. The erstwhile illuminated theatre is as dark as the Hall of Eblis. "Gone the idols! All. I need but crack that old whip of Decadence and they crumble. So much for a mere word. And now to work. I'll write the unique tale of Shaw's Cave of Idols, for I alone witnessed the dénouement." He spoke aloud. Judge his chagrin when he heard the other Max give him this cheery leading motive: "I saw it all — what a story for my weekly review."

"How like a yellow pear-tree!" exclaims the disgusted theorist of mad genius. Nordau speeds his way, as from the box-office comes the chink of silver. It is G. B. S. counting the cash. Who says a poet can't be a pragmatist? The little Maxixe calls out: "Me, too, Blarney! Remember I'm the only living replica of Charles Lamb." "You mean dead mutton," tartly replied Bernard. The other giggled. "The same dear old whimsical cactus," he cries; "but with all your faults we love you still — I said still, if that's possible for your tongue, George, quite still!" Curtain.

THE WOMAN WHO BUYS

She (entering art gallery): "I wish to buy a Titian for my bridge-whist this evening. Is it possible for you to send me one to the hotel in time?" He (nervously elated): "Impossible. I sent the last Titian we had in stock to Mrs. Groats's Déjeuner Féroce." She (making a face): "That woman again. Oh, dear, how tiresome!" He (eagerly): "But I can give you a Raphael." She (dubiously): "Raphael — who?" He (magisterially): "There are three Raphaels, Madame — the archangel of that name, Raphael Sanzio, the painter, and Raphael Joseffy. It is to the second one I allude. Perhaps you would like to see —" She (hurriedly): "Oh! not at all. I fancy it's all right. Send it up this afternoon, or hadn't

I better take it along in my car?" (A shrill hurry-up booing is heard without. It is the voice of the siren on a new one hundred horse-power Cubist machine, 1918 pattern.) She (guiltily): "Tiens! That is my chauffeur, Constant. The poor fellow. He is always so hungry about this time. By the way, Mr. Frame, how much do you ask for that Raphael? My husband is so — yes, really, stingy this winter. He says I buy too much, forgetting we are all beggars, anyhow. And what is the subject? I want something cheerful for the game, you know. It consoles the kickers who lose to look at a pretty picture." He (joyfully): "Oh, the price! The subject! A half-million is the price — surely not too much. The picture is called The Wooing of Eve. It has been engraved by Bartolozzi. Oh, oh, it is a genuine Raphael. There are no more imitation old masters, only modern art is forged nowadays." She (interrupting, proudly): "Bartolozzi, the man who paints skinny women in Florence, something like Boldini, only in old-fashioned costumes?" He (resignedly): "No, Madamè. Possibly you allude to Botticelli. The Bartolozzi I mention was a school friend of Raphael or a cousin to Michael Angelo — I've forgotten which. That's why he engraved Raphael's paintings." (He colours as he recalls conflicting dates.) She (in a hurry): "It doesn't much matter, Mr. Frame, I hate all this affectation over a lot of musty, fusty pic-

tures. Send it up with the bill. I ought to win at least half the money from Mrs. Stonerich." (She rushes away. An odour of violets and stale cigarette smoke floats through the hallway. The siren screams, and a rumbling is heard in the middle distance.) He (waking, as if from a sweet dream, vigorously shouts): "George, George, fetch down that canvas Schmiere painted for us last summer, and stencil it Raphael Sanzio. Yes — S-a-n-z-i-o — got it? Hurry up! I'm off for the day. If any one 'phones, I'm over at Sherry's, in the Café." (Saunters out, swinging his stick, and repeating the old Russian proverb, "A dark forest is the heart of a woman.")

SCHOOLS IN ART

"Yes," said the venerable auctioneer, as he shook his white head, "yes, I watch them coming and going, coming and going. One year it's light pictures, another it's dark. The public is a woman. What fashion dictates to a woman she scrupulously follows. She sports bonnets one decade, big picture hats the next. So, the public that loves art — or thinks it loves art. It used to be the Hudson River school. And then Chase and those landscape fellows came over from Europe, where they got a lot of newfangled notions. Do you remember Eastman Johnson? He was my man for years. Do you remember the Fortuny craze? His Gamblers,

some figures sitting on the grass? Well, sir, seventeen thousand dollars that canvas fetched. Big price for forty-odd years ago. Bang up? Of course. Meissonier, Bouguereau, and Detaille came in. We couldn't sell them fast enough. I guess the picture counterfeiters' factories up on Montmartre were kept busy those times. It was after our Civil War. There were a lot of mushroom millionaires who couldn't tell a chromo from a Gérôme. Those were the chaps we liked. I often began with: 'Ten thousand dollars — who offers me ten thousand dollars for this magnificent Munkaczy?' Nowadays I couldn't give away Munkaczy as a present. He is too black. Our people ask for flashing colours. Rainbows. Fireworks. The new school? Yes, I'm free to admit that the Barbizon men have had their day. Mind you, I don't claim they are falling off. A few seasons ago a Troyon held its own against any Manet you put up. But the 1830 chaps are scarcer in the market, and the picture cranks are beginning to tire of the dull greys, soft blues, and sober skies. The Barbizons drove out Meissonier and his crowd. Then Monet and the Impressionists sent the Barbizons to the wall. I tell you the public is a woman. It craves novelty. What's that? Interested in the greater truth of Post-Impressionism? Excuse me, my dear sir, but that's pure rot. The public doesn't give a hang for technique. It wants a change. Indeed? Really? They have

made a success, those young whippersnappers, the Cubists. Such cubs! Well, I'm not surprised. Perhaps our public is tiring of the Academy. Perhaps young American painters may get their dues — some day. We may even export them. I've been an art auctioneer man and boy over fifty years, and I tell you again the public is a woman. One year it's dark paint, another it's light. Bonnets or hats. Silks or satins. Lean or stout. All right. Coming — coming!" Clearing his throat, the old auctioneer slowly moves away.

THE JOY OF STARING

Watch the mob. Watch it staring. Like cattle behind the rails which bar a fat green field they pass at leisure, ruminating, or its equivalent, gum-chewing, passing masterpiece after masterpiece, only to let their gaze joyfully light upon some silly canvas depicting a thrice-stupid anecdote. The socialists assure us that the herd is the ideal of the future. We must think, see, feel with the People. Our brethren! Mighty idea — but a stale one before Noah entered the ark. "Let us go to the people," cried Tolstoy. But we are the people. How can we go to a place when we are already there? And the people surge before a picture which represents an old woman kissing her cow. Or, standing with eyeballs agog, they count the metal buttons on the coat of the Meissonier

Cuirassier. It is great art. Let the public be educated. Down with the new realism — which only recalls to us the bitterness and meanness of our mediocre existence. (Are we not all middle-class?) How, then, can art be aristocratic? Why art at all? Give us the cinematograph — pictures that act. Squeaking records. Canned vocally, Caruso is worth a wilderness of Wagner monkeys. Or self-playing unmusical machines. Or chromos. Therefore, let us joyfully stare. Instead of your "step," watch the mob.

A DILETTANTE

He is a little old fellow, with a slight glaze over the pupils of his eyes. He is never dressed in the height of the fashion, yet, when he enters a gallery, salesmen make an involuntary step in his direction; then they get to cover as speedily as possible, grumbling: "Look out! it's only the old bird again." But one of them is always nailed; there is no escaping the Barmecide. He thinks he knows more about etchings than Kennedy or Keppel, and when Montross and Macbeth tell him of American art, he violently contradicts them. He is the embittered dilettante; embittered, because with his moderate means he can never hope to own even the most insignificant of the treasures exposed under his eyes every day, week, and month in the year. So he rails at the dealers,

inveighs against the artists, and haunts auction-rooms. He never bids, but is extremely solicitous about the purchases of other people. He has been known to sit for hours on a small print, until, in despair, the owner leaves. Then, with infinite precautions, our amateur arises, so contriving matters that his hard-won victory is not discovered by profane and prying eyes. Once at home, he gloats over his prize, showing it to a favoured few. He bought it. He selected it. It is a tribute to his exquisite taste. And the listeners are beaten into dismayed silence by his vociferations, by his agile, ape-like skippings and parrot ejaculations. Withal, he is not a criminal, only a monomaniac of art. He sometimes mistakes a Whistler for a Dürer; but he puts the blame upon his defective eyesight.

THE CITY OF BROTHERLY NOISE

Philadelphia is the noisiest city in North America. If you walk about any of the narrow streets of this cold-storage abode of Brotherly Love you will soon see tottering on its legs the venerable New York joke concerning the cemetery-like stillness of the abode of brotherly love. Over there the nerve shock is ultra-dynamic. As for sleep, it is out of the question. Why, then, will ask the puzzled student of national life, does the venerable witticism persist in living? The answer is that in the

United States a truth promulgated a century ago never dies. We are a race of humourists. Noise-breeding trolley-cars, constricted streets that vibrate with the clangour of the loosely jointed machinery, an army of carts and the cries of vegetable venders, a multitude of jostling people making for the ferries on the Delaware or the bridges on the Schuylkill rivers, together with the hum of vast manufactories, all these and a thousand other things place New York in a more modest category; in reality our own city emits few pipes in comparison with the City of Brotherly Noise which sprawls over the map of Pennsylvania. Yet it is called dead and moss-grown. The antique joke flourishes the world over; in Philadelphia it is stunned by the welter and crush of life and politics. Oscar Hammerstein first crossed the Rubicon of Market Street. The mountain of "society" was forced to go northward to this Mahomet of operatic music; else forego Richard Strauss, Debussy, Massenet, Mary Garden, and Oscar's famous head-tile. What a feat to boast of! For hundreds of years Market Street had been the balking-line of supernice Philadelphians. Above the delectable region north of the City Hall and Penn's statue was Cimmerian darkness. Hammerstein, with his opera company, accomplished the miracle. Perfectly proper persons now say "Girard Avenue" or "Spring Garden" without blushing, because of their increased knowledge of municipal

topography. Society trooped northward. Motor-cars from Rittenhouse Square were seen near Poplar Street. Philadelphia boasts a much superior culture in the crustacean line. The best fried oysters in the world are to be found there. Terrapin is the local god. And Dennis McGowan of Sansom Street hangs his banners on the outer walls; within, red-snapper soup and deviled crabs make the heart grow fonder.

The difference in the handling of the social "hammer" between Philadelphia and New York, or Boston and Philadelphia, may be thus illustrated: At the clubs in Philadelphia they say: "Dabs is going fast. Pity he drinks. Did you see the seven cocktails he got away with before dinner last night?" In Boston they say: "Dabs is quite hopeless. This afternoon he mixed up Botticelli with Botticini. Of course, after that — !" Now, in New York, we usually dismiss the case in this fashion: "Dabs went smash this morning. The limit! Serves the idiot right. He never would take proper tips." Here are certain social characteristics of three cities set forth by kindly disposed clubmen. As the Chinese say: An image-maker never worships his idols. We prefer the Cambodian sage who remarked: "In hell, it's bad form to harp on the heat."

THE SOCIALIST

The socialist is not always sociable. Nor is there any reason why he should be. He usually brings into whatever company he frequents his little pailful of theories and dumps them willy-nilly on the carpet of conversation. He enacts the eternal farce of equality for all, justice for none. The mob, not the individual, is his shibboleth. Yet he is the first to resent any tap on his shoulder in the way of personal criticism. He has been in existence since the coral atoll was constructed by that tiny, busy, gregarious creature, and in the final cosmic flare-up he will vanish in company with his fellow man. He is nothing if not collective. His books, written in his own tongue, are translated into every living language except sound English, which is inimical to jargon. If his communal dreams could come true he would charge his neighbour with cheating above his position; being a reformer, the fire of envy brightly burns in his belly — a sinister conflagration akin to that of Ram Dass (see Carlyle). In the thick twilight of his reason he vaguely wanders, reading every new book about socialism till his confusion grows apace and is thrice confounded. From ignorance to arrogance is but a step. At the rich table of life, groaning with good things, he turns away, preferring to chew the dry cud of self-satisfaction.

He would commit Barmecide rather than surrender his theory of the "unearned increment." He calls Shaw and Wells traitors because they see the humorous side of their doctrines and, occasionally, make mock of them. The varieties of lady socialists are too numerous to study. It may be said of them, without fear of being polite, that females rush in where fools fear to tread. But, then, the woman who hesitates — usually gets married.

THE CRITIC WHO GOSSIPS

He has a soul like a Persian rug. Many-coloured are his ways, his speech. He delights in alliteration of colours, and avails himself of it when he dips pen into ink. He is fond of confusing the technical terms of the Seven Arts, writing that "stuffing the ballot-box is no greater crime than constipated harmonics." But what he doesn't know is that such expressions as gamut of colours, scales, harmonies, tonal values belong to the art of painting, and not alone to music. He is fonder of anecdote and gossip than of history. But what's the use! You can't carve rotten wood. Our critic will quote for you, with his gimlet eye of a specialist boring into your own, the story which was whispered to Anthony Trollope (in 1857, please don't forget) if he would be so kind (it was at the Uffizi Galleries, Florence) as to show him the way to the Medical Venus. This is marvel-

lous humour, and worth a ton of critical comment (which, by Apollo! it be). But, as Baudelaire puts it: "Nations, like families, produce great men against their will"; and our critic is "produced," not made. In the realm of the blind, the cock-eyed is king. The critic is said to be the most necessary nuisance — after women — in this "movie" world of ours. But all human beings are critics, aren't they?

THE MOCK PSYCHIATRIST

If for the dog the world is a smell, for the eagle a picture, for the politician a Nibelung hoard, then for the psychiatrist life is a huge, throbbing nerve. He dislikes, naturally, the antivivisectionists, but enjoys the moral vivisection of his fellow creatures. It's a mad world for him, my masters! And if your ears taper at the top, beware! You have the morals of a faun; or, if your arms be lengthy, you are a reversion to a prehistoric type. The only things that are never too long, for our friend the "expert" of rare phobias, are his bills and the length of his notice in the newspapers. If he agrees with Charles Lamb that Adam and Eve in Milton's Paradise behave too much like married people, he quickly resents any tracing of a religion to an instinct or a perception. He maintains that religious feeling is only "a mode of reaction," and our conscience but a readjusting apparatus. His trump-card

is the abnormal case, and if he can catch tripping a musician, a poet, a painter, he is professionally happy. Homer nodded. Shakespeare plagiarised. Beethoven drank. Mozart liked his wife's sister. Chopin coughed. Turner was immoral. Wagner, a little how-come-ye-so! Hurray! Cracked souls, and a Donnybrook Fair of the emotions. The psychiatrist can diagnose anything from rum-thirst to sudden death. Nevertheless, in his endeavour to assume the outward appearance of a veritable man of science, the psychiatrist reminds one of the hermit-crab as described in E. H. Banfield's Confessions of a Beach Comber (p. 132). "The disinterested spectator," remarks Professor Banfield, "may smile at the vain, yet frantically anxious efforts of the hermit-crab to coax his flabby rear into a shell obviously a flattering misfit; but it is not a smiling matter to him. Not until he has exhausted a programme of ingenious attitudes and comic contortions is the attempt to stow away a No. 8 tail in a No. 5 shell abandoned." The mock psychiatrist is the hermit-crab of psychology. And of the living he has never been known to speak a word of praise.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE REFORMATION OF GEORGE MOORE

I

DEAR naughty George Moore — sad, bad, mad — has reformed. He tells us why in his book, Vale, the English edition of which I was lucky enough to read; for, the American edition is expurgated, nay, fumigated, as was the Memoirs of My Dead Life by the same Celtic Casanova. Vale completes the trilogy; Hail and Farewell, Ave and Salve being the titles of the preceding two. In the first, Moore is sufficiently vitriolic, and in Salve he serves up George Russell, the poet and painter, better known as "Æ." in a more sympathetic fashion. When Vale was announced several years ago as on the brink of completion I was moved to write: "I suppose when the final book appears it means that George Moore has put up the shutters of his soul, not to say, his shop. But I have my serious doubts." After reading Vale I still had them. Only death will end the streaming confessions of this writer. He who lives by the pen shall perish by the pen. (This latter sentence is not a quotation from the

sacred books of any creed, merely the conviction of a slave chained to the ink-well.)

I said that Vale is expurgated for American consumption. Certainly. We are so averse to racy, forcible English in America — thanks to the mean, narrow spirit in our arts and letters — that a hearty oath scares us into the Brooklyn backyard of our timid conscience. George calls a spade a spade, and he delights on stirring up rank malodorous soil with his war-worn agricultural implement. When he returned some years ago to Dublin, there to help in the national literary and artistic movement, he found a devoted band of brethren: William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, Douglas Hyde, John M. Synge, Edward Martyn, Russell, and others.

I shan't attempt even a brief mention of the neo-Celtic awakening. Yeats was the prime instigator, also the storm-centre. He literally discovered Synge, the dramatist — in reality the only strong man of the group, the only dramatist of originality — and, with his exquisite lyric gift, he, also discovered a new Ireland, a fabulous, beautiful Erin, unsuspected by Tom Moore, Samuel Lover, Carleton, Mangan, Lever, and the too busy Boucicault.

As I soon found out, when there, Dublin is a vast whispering gallery. Delightful, hospitable Dublin is also a provincial town, given to gossip and backbiting. Say something about somebody in the smoking-room of the Shel-

bourne, and a few hours later the clubs will be repeating it. Mr. Moore said things every hour in the day, and in less than six days he had sown for himself a fine crop of enemies. To "get even" he conceived the idea of writing a series of novels, with real people bearing their own names. That he hasn't been shot at, horsewhipped, or sued for libel thus far is just his usual good luck. Vale is largely a book of capricious insults.

But then the facts it sets down in cruel type! When the years have removed the actors therein from the earthly scene, our grandchildren will chuckle over Moore's unconscious humour and Pepys-like chronicling of small-beer. For the social historian this trilogy will prove a mine of gossip, rich veracious gossip. It throws a calcium glare on the soul of the author, who, self-confessed, is now old, and no longer a dangerous Don Juan. In real life he was, as far as I can make out, not particularly a monster of iniquity; but, oh! in his Confessions and Memoirs what a rake was he. How the "lascivious lute" did sound. Some of the pages of the new volume (see pp. 274–278, English edition), in which he describes his tactics to avoid a kiss (kissing gives him a headache in these lonesome latter years, though he was only born in 1857), is to set you wondering over the frankness of the man. Walter Pater once called him "audacious George Moore," and audacious he is with pen and ink.

Otherwise, like Bernard Shaw, he is not looking for physical quarrels.

He once spoke of Shaw as "the funny man in a boarding-house," though he never mentions his name in his memoirs. He doesn't like Yeats; what's more, he prints the news as often and as elaborately as possible. In the present book he doesn't exactly compare Yeats to a crane or a pelican, but he calls attention to the fact that the poet belonged to the "lower middle-class." It seems that Yeats had been thundering away at the artistic indifference of the Dublin bourgeoisie. Now, looking at Yeats the night when John Quinn gave him a dinner at Delmonico's, you could not note any resemblance to exotic birds, though he might recall a penguin. He was very solemn, very bored, very fatigued, his eyes deep sunken from fatigue. Posing as a tame parlour poet for six weeks had tired the man to his very bones. But catch him in private with his waistcoat unbuttoned — I speak figuratively — and you will enjoy a born raconteur, one who slowly distils witty poison at the tip of every anecdote, till, bursting with glee, you cry: "How these literary men do love each other! How one Irishman dotes on another!" Yeats may be an exception to the rule that a poet is as vain and as irritable as a tenor. I didn't notice the irritability, finding him taking himself seriously, as should all apostles of culture and Celtic twilight.

He "got even" with George Moore's virulent attacks by telling a capital story, which he confessed was invented, one that went all over Dublin and London. When George felt the call of a Protestant conversion he was in Dublin. He has told us of his difficulties, mental and temperamental. One day some question of dogma presented itself and he hurried to the Cathedral for advice. He sent in his name to the Archbishop, and that forgetful dignitary exclaimed: "Moore, Moore, oh, that man again! Well, give him another pair of blankets." In later versions, coals, candles, even shillings, were added to the apocryphal anecdote — which, by the way, set smiling the usually impassive Moore, who can see a joke every now and then.

Better still is the true tale of George, who boasts much in Vale of his riding dangerous mounts; and when challenged at an English country house did get on the back of a vicious animal and ride to hounds the better part of a day. He wouldn't, quite properly, take the "dare," although when he reached his room he found his boots full of blood. So there is sporting temper in him. Any one reading his Esther Waters may note that he knows the racing stable by heart. In Vale he describes his father's stable at Castle Moore, County Mayo.

Of course, this is not the time to attempt an estimate of his complete work, for who may say what fresh outbursts, what new impru-

dences in black and white, we may expect? He has paid his respects to his fellow countrymen, and is heartily despised by all camps, political, religious, artistic. He has belittled the work of Lady Gregory, Yeats, and Edwin Martyn, and has rather patronised John M. Synge; the latter, possibly, because Synge was "discovered" by Yeats, not Moore. Yet do we enjoy the vagaries of George Moore. I only saw him once, a long time ago, to be precise in 1901, at Bayreuth. He looked more like a bird than Yeats, though his beak is not so predaceous as Yeats's; a golden-crested bird, with a chin as diffident as a poached egg, and with melancholy pale-blue eyes, and an undecided gait. He talked of the Irish language as if it were the only redemption for poor unhappy Ireland. In Vale there is not the same enthusiasm. He dwells with more delight on his early Parisian experiences — it is the best part of the book — and to my way of thinking the essential George Moore is to be found only in Paris; London is an afterthought. The Paris of Manet, Monet, Degas, Whistler, Huysmans, Zola, Verlaine, and all the "new" men of 1880 — what an unexplored vein he did work for the profit and delectation of the English-speaking world. True critical yeoman's work, for to preach impressionism twenty-five years ago in London was to court a rumpus. What hard names were rained upon the yellow head of George Moore — that colour so ad-

mired by Manet and so wonderfully painted by him — in the academic camp. He replied with all the vivacity of vocabulary which your true Celt usually has on tap. He even "went for" the Pre-Raphaelites, a band of overrated mediocrities — on the pictorial side, at least — though John Millais was a talent — and for years was as a solitary prophet in a city of Philistines. The world caught up with Moore, and to-day the shoe pinches on the other foot — it is George who is a belated critic of the "New Art" (most of it as stale as the Medes and Persians), and many are the wordy battles waged at the Café Royal, London, when Augustus John happens in of an evening and finds the author of Modern Painting denouncing Debussy in company with Matisse and other Post-Imitators. Manet, like Moore, is "old hat" (vieux chapeau) for modern youth. It's well to go to bed not too late in life, else some impertinent youngster may cry aloud: "What's that venerable granddaddy doing up at this time of night?" To each generation its critics.

II

In one of his fulminations against Christianity Nietzsche said that the first and only Christian died on the cross. George Moore thinks otherwise, at least he gives a novel version of the narrative in the synoptic Gospels.

The Brook Kerith is a fiction dealing with the life of Christ. It is a book that will offend the faithful, and one that will not convince the heterodox. In it George Moore sets forth his ideas concerning the Christ "myth," evoking, as does Flaubert in Salammbô, a vanished land, a vanished civilisation, and in a style that is artistically beautiful. Never has he written with such sustained power, intensity and nobility of phrasing, such finely tempered, modulated prose. It is a rhythmed prose which first peeped forth in some pages of Mr. Moore's Evelyn Innes when the theme bordered on the mystical. Yet it is of an essentially Celtic character. Mysticism and Moore do not seem bedfellows. Nevertheless, Mr. Moore has been haunted from his first elaborate novel, A Drama in Muslin, by mystic and theological questions. A pagan by temperament, his soul is the soul of an Irish Roman Catholic. He can no more escape the fascinating ideas of faith and salvation than did Huysmans. (He has taken exception to this statement in an open letter.) A realist at the beginning, he has leaned of late years heavily on the side of the spirit. But like Baudelaire, Barbey d'Auréville, Villiers de L'Isle Adam, Paul Verlaine, and Huysmans, Mr. Moore is one of those sons of Mother Church who give anxious pause to his former coreligionists. The Brook Kerith will prove a formidable rock of offence, and it may be said that it was on the Index before

it was written. And yet we find in it George Moore among the prophets.

Perhaps Mr. Moore has read the critical work of Professor Arthur Drews, The Christ Myth. It is a masterpiece of destruction. There are many books in which Jesus Christ figures. Ernest Renan's Life, written in his silky and sophisticated style, is no more admired by Christians than the cruder study by Strauss. After these the deluge, ending with the dream by the late Remy de Gourmont, Une Nuit au Luxembourg. And there is the brilliant and poetic study of Edgar Saltus, his Mary Magdalen. Anatole France has distilled into his The Revolt of the Angels some of his acid hatred of all religions, with blasphemous and obscene notes not missing. It may be remembered that M. France also wrote that pastel of irony The Procurator of Judea, in which Pontius Pilate is shown in his old age, rich, ennuied, sick. He has quite forgotten, when asked, about the Jewish agitator who fancied himself the son of God and was given over to the Temple authorities in Jerusalem and crucified. Rising from the tomb on the third day he became the Christ of the Christian dispensation, aided by the religious genius of one Paul, formerly known as Saul the Tentmaker of Tarsus. Now Mr. Moore does in a larger mould and in the grand manner what Anatole France accomplished in his miniature. The ironic method, a tragic irony, suffuses

every page of The Brook Kerith, and the story of the four Gospels is twisted into something perverse, and for Christians altogether shocking. It will be called "blasphemous," but we must remember that our national Constitution makes no allowance for so-called "blasphemers"; that the mythologies of the Greeks and Romans, Jews and Christians, Mohammedans and Mormons may be criticised, yet the criticism is not inherently "blasphemous." America is no more a Christian than a Jewish nation or a nation of freethinkers. It is free to all races and religions, and thus one man's spiritual meat may be another's emetic.

Having cleared our mind of cant, let us investigate The Brook Kerith. The title is applied to a tiny community of Jewish mystics, the Essenes, who lived near this stream; perhaps the Scriptural Kedron? This brotherhood had separated from the materialistic Pharisees and Sadducees, not approving of burnt sacrifices or Temple worship; furthermore, they practised celibacy till a schism within their ranks drove the minority away from the parent body to shift for themselves. A young shepherd, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph, a carpenter in Galilee, and of Miriam, his mother — they have other sons — is a member of this community. But too much meditation on the prophecies of Daniel and the meeting with a wandering prophet, John the Baptist, the precursor of the long-foretold Messiah, lead him

astray. Baptised in the waters of Jordan, Jesus becomes a theomaniac — he believes himself to be the son of God, appointed by the heavenly father to save mankind; especially his fellow Jews. Filled with a fanatical fire, he leads away a dozen disciples, poor, ignorant fishermen. He also attracts the curiosity of Joseph, the only son of a rich merchant of Arimathea. Two-thirds of the novel are devoted to the psychology of this youthful philosopher, who, inducted into the wisdom of the Greek sophists, is, notwithstanding, a fervent Jew, a rigid upholder of the Law and the Prophets. The dialogues between father and son rather recall Erin, hardly Syria. Joseph becomes interested in Jesus, follows him about, and the fatal day of the crucifixion he beseeches his friend Pilate to let him have the body of his Lord for a worthy interment. Pilate demurs, then accedes. Joseph, with the aid of the two holy women Mary and Martha, places the corpse of the dead divinity in a sepulchre.

If Joseph hadn't been killed by the zealots of Jerusalem (heated to this murder by the High Priest) the title of the book might have been "Joseph of Arimathea." He is easily the most viable figure. Jesus is too much of the god from the machine; but he serves the author for the development of his ingenious theory. Finding the Christ still alive, Joseph carries him secretly and after dark to the house of his father, hides him and listens unmoved to the fantastic

tales of a resurrection. But the spies of Caiaphas are everywhere, Jesus is in danger of a second crucifixion, so Joseph takes him back to the Essenes, where he resumes his old occupation of herding sheep. Feeble in mind and body, he gradually wins back health and spiritual peace. He regrets his former arrogance and blasphemy and ascribes the aberration to the insidious temptings of the demon. It seems that in those troubled days the cities and countryside were infested by madmen, messiahs, redeemers, preaching the speedy destruction of the world. For a period Jesus called himself a son of God and threatened his fellow men with fire and the sword.

Till he was five and fifty years Jesus lived with his flocks. The idyllic pictures are in Mr. Moore's most charming vein; sober, as befits the dignity of the theme. He has fashioned an undulating prose, each paragraph a page long, which flows with some of the clarity and music of a style once derided by him, the style coulant of that master of harmonies, Cardinal Newman. He is a great landscape-painter.

Jesus is aging. He gives up his shepherd's crook to his successor and contemplates a retreat where he may meditate the thrilling events of his youth. Then Paul of Tarsus intervenes. He is vigorously painted. A refugee from Jerusalem, with Timothy lost somewhere in Galilee, he invades the Essenian monastery. Eloquent pages follow. Paul relates his adventures under

the banner of Jesus Christ. A disputatious man, full of the Lord, yet not making it any easier for his disciples. You catch a glimpse of Pauline Christianity, differing from the tender message of Jesus; that Jesus of whom Havelock Ellis wrote: "Jesus found no successor. Over the stage of those gracious and radiant scenes swiftly fell a fireproof curtain, wrought of systematic theology and formal metaphysics, which even the divine flames of that wonderful personality were unable to melt."

If this be the case then Paul was, if not the founder, the foster-father of the new creed. A seer of epileptic visions — Edgar Saltus has said of the "sacred disease" that all founders of religions have been epileptics — Paul, with the intractable temperament of a stubborn Pharisee, was softened by some Greek blood, yet as Renan wrote of Amiel: "He speaks of sin, of salvation, of redemption and conversion, and other theological bric-a-brac, as if these things were realities." For Paul and those who followed him they were and are realities; from them is spun the web of our modern civilisation. The dismay of Paul on learning from the lips of Jesus that he it was who, crucified, came back to life may be fancy. The sturdy Apostle, who recalled the reproachful words of Jesus issuing from the blinding light on the road to Damascus: "Paul, Paul, why persecutest thou me?" naturally enough de-

nounced Jesus as a madman, but accepted his services as a guide to Cæsarea, where, in company with Timothy, he hoped to embark for Rome, there to spread the glad tidings, there to preach the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified.

On the way he cautiously extracts from Jesus, whose memory of his cruel tormentors is halting, parts of his story. He believes him a half-crazy fanatic, deluded with the notion that he is the original Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus gently expounds his theories, though George Moore pulls the wires. A pantheism that ends in Nirvana, Néant, Nada, Nothing! Despairing of ever forcing the world to see the light, he is become a Quietist, almost a Buddhist. He might have quoted the mystic Joachim Flora — of the Third Kingdom — who said that the true ascetic counts nothing his own save only his harp. ("Qui vere monachus est nihil reputat esse suum nisi citharam.") When a man's cross becomes too heavy a burden to carry then let him cast it away. Jesus cast his cross away — his spiritual ambition — believing that too great love of God leads to propagation of the belief, then to hatred and persecution of them that won't believe.

The Jews, says Jesus, are an intolerant, stiff-necked people; they love God, yet they hate men. Horrified at all this, Paul parts company with the Son of Man, secretly relieved to hear that he is not going, as he had contemplated,

to give himself up to Hanan, the High Priest in Jerusalem, to denounce the falseness of the heretical sect named after him. Paul, without crediting the story, saw in Jesus a dangerous rival. The last we hear of the divine shepherd is a rumour that he may join a roving band of East Indians and go to the source of all beliefs, to Asia, impure, mysterious Asia; the mother of mystic cults. Paul too disappears, and on the little coda: "The rest of his story is unknown." We are fain to believe that the "rest of his story" is very well known in the wide world. The book is another milestone along Mr. Moore's road to Damascus.

If, as Charles Baudelaire has said, "Superstition is the reservoir of all truths," then, we have lost our spiritual bearings in the dark forest of modern rationalism. To be sure, we have a Yankee Pope Joan, a Messiah in petticoats who has uttered the illuminating phrase, "My first and for ever message is one and eternal," which is no more a parody of Holy Writ than The Brook Kerith, a book which while it must have given its author pains to write — so full of Talmudic and Oriental lore and the lore of the apocryphal gospels is it — must have been also a joy to him as a literary artist. The poignant irony of Paul's disbelief in the real Jesus is understandable, though it is bound to raise a chorus of protestations. But Mr. Moore never worried over abuse. He has, Celt that he is, followed his vision. In

every man's heart there is a lake, he says, and the lake in his heart is a sombre one, a very pool of incertitudes. One feels like quoting to him — though it would be unnecessary, as he knows well the quotation — what Barbey d'Aurevilly once wrote to Baudelaire, and years later of Joris-Karel Huysmans, that he would either blow out his brains or prostrate himself at the foot of the cross. Mr. Moore has in the past made his genuflections. But they were before the Jesus of his native religion; the poetic though not profound image he has created in his new book will never seem the godlike man of whom Browning said in Saul: "Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee. See the Christ stand!"

CHAPTER XXIV

PILLOWLAND

In his immortal essay on the "flat swamp of convalescence" Charles Lamb speaks from personal experience of the "king-like way" the sick man "sways his pillow — tumbling, and tossing, and shifting, and lowering, and thumping, and flatting, and moulding it, to the ever-varying requisitions of his throbbing temples. He changes *sides* oftener than a politician." How true this is — even to the italicised word — I discovered for myself after a personal encounter with the malignant Pneumococcus, backed up by his ally, the pleurisy. Such was the novelty of my first serious illness that it literally took my breath away. When I recovered my normal wind I found myself monarch of all I surveyed, my kingdom a bed, yet seemingly a land without limit, — who dares circumscribe the imagination of an invalid? As to the truth of Mr. Lamb's remarks on the selfishness of the sick man there can be no denial. His pillow is his throne — from it he issues his orders for the day, his bulletins for the night. The nurse is his prime minister, his right hand; with her moral alliance he is enabled to defy a host of officious advisers.

But woe betide him if nurse and spouse plot against him. Then he is helpless. Then he is past saving. His little pet schemes are shattered in the making. He is shifted and mauled. He is prodded and found wanting. No hope for the helpless devil as his face is scrubbed, his hands made clean, his miserable tangled hair combed straight. In Pillowland what Avatar? None, alas! Nevertheless, your pillow is your best friend, your only confidant. In its cool yielding depths you whisper (yes, one is reduced to an evasive whisper, such is the cowardice superinduced by physical weakness) "Bedpans are not for bedouins. I'll have none of them." And then you swallow the next bitter pill the nurse offers. Suffering ennobles, wrote Nietzsche. I suppose he is right, but in my case the nobility is yet to appear. Meek, terribly meek, sickness makes one. You suffer a sea change, and without richness. The most annoying part of the business is that you were not consulted as to your choice of maladies; worse remains: you are not allowed to cure yourself. I loathe pneumonia, since I came to grips with the beast. The next time I'll go out of my way to select some exotic fever. Then my doctor will be vastly intrigued. I had a common or garden variety of lung trouble. Pooh! his eyes seemed to say — I read their meaning with the clairvoyance of the defeated — we shall have this fellow on his hind-legs in a jiffy. And I didn't want to get well too

rapidly. Like Saint Augustine I felt like praying with a slight change of text: "Give me chastity and constancy, but not yet." Give, I said to my doctor, health, but let me loaf a little longer. Time takes toll of eternity and I've worked my pen and wagged my tongue for twice twenty years. I need a rest. So do my readers. The divine rights of cabbages and of kings are also shared by mere newspaper men. A litany of massive phrases followed. But in vain. The doctor was inexorable. I had pneumonia. My temperature was tropical. My heart beat in ragtime rhythm, and my pulse was out of the running. I realised as I tried to summon to my parched lips my favourite "red lattice oaths" that, as Cabanis put it years ago: "Man is a digestive tube pierced at both ends." All the velvet vanities of life had vanished. I could no longer think in alliterative sentences. Only walking delegates of ideas filled my hollow skull like dried peas in a bladder. Finally, I "concentrated" — as the unchristian unscientists say — on the nurse, my nurse.

As an old reporter of things theatrical I had seen many plays with the trained nurse as heroine. One and all I abhorred them, even the gentle and artistic impersonation of Margaret Anglin in a piece whose name I've forgotten. I welcomed a novel by Edgar Saltus in which the nurse is depicted as a monster of crime incarnate. How mistaken I have been. Now, the trained nurse seems an angel without

wings. She may not be the slender, dainty, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired girl of the footlights; she is often mature and stout and a lover of potatoes. But she is a sister when a man is down. She is severe, but her severity hath good cause. At first you feebly utter the word "nurse." Later she is any Irish royal family name. Follows, "Mary," and that way danger lies for the elderly invalid. When he calls her "Marie" he is doomed. Every day the newspapers tell us of marriages made in pillowland between the well-to-do widower, Mr. A. Sclerosis, and Miss Emma Metic of the Saint Petronius Hospital staff. Married sons and daughters may protest, but to no avail. A sentimental bachelor or widower in the lonesome latter years hasn't any more chance with a determined young nurse of the unfair sex than a "snowbird in hell" — as Brother Mencken phrases it.

However, every nurse has her day. She finally departs. Your eyes are wet. You are weeping over yourself. The nurse represented not only care for your precious carcass but also a surcease from the demands of the world. Her going means a return to work, and you hate to work if you are a convalescent of the true-blue sort. Hence your tears. But you soon recover. You are free. The doctor has lost interest in your case. You throw physic to the dogs. You march at a lenten tempo about your embattled bed. You begin sudden

little arguments with your wife, just to see if you haven't lost any of your old-time virility in the technique of household squabbling. You haven't. You swell with masculine satisfaction and for at least five minutes you are the Man of the House. A sudden twinge, a momentary giddiness, send you scurrying back to your bailiwick, the bedroom, and the familiar leitmotiv is once more sounded, and with what humility of accent: "Mamma!" The Eternal Masculine? The Eternal Child! You mumble to her that it is nothing, and as you recline on that thrice-accursed couch, you endeavour to be haughty. But she knows you are simply a sick grumpy old person of the male species who needs be ruled with a rod of iron, although the metal be well hidden.

The first cautious peep from a window upon the world you left snow white, and find in vernal green, is an experience almost worth the miseries you have so impatiently endured. A veritable vacation for the eyes, you tell yourself, as the fauna and flora of Flatbush break upon your enraptured gaze. Presently you watch with breathless interest the manœuvres of ruddy little Georgie in the next garden as he manfully deploys a troupe of childish contemporaries, his little sister doggedly traipsing at the rear. Sturdy Georgie has the makings of a leader. He may be a Captain of Commerce, a Colonel, and Master-politician; but he will always be foremost, else nowhere. "You are the au-

dience," he imperiously bids his companions, and when rebellion seemed imminent he punched, without a trace of anger, a boy much taller. I envied Georgie his abounding vitality. Furtively I raised the window. Instantly I was spied by Georgie who cried lustily: "Little boy, little boy, come down and play with me!" I almost felt gay, "You come up here," I called out with one lung. "I haven't a stepladder," he promptly replied. The fifth floor is as remote without a ladder as age is separated from youth. (Now I'm moralising!) Undismayed, Georgie continued to call: "Little boy, little boy, come down and play with me!"

The most disheartening thing about a first sickness is the friend who meets you and says: "I never saw you look better in your life." It may be true, but he shouldn't have said it so crudely. You renounce then and there the doctor with all his pomps of healing. You refuse to become a professional convalescent. You are cured and once more a commonplace man, one of the healthy herd. Notwithstanding you feel secretly humiliated. You are no longer King of Pillowland.

CHAPTER XXV

CROSS-CURRENTS IN MODERN FRENCH LITERATURE

I

THEY order certain things better in France than elsewhere; I mean such teasing and unsatisfactory forms of book-making known as Inquiries ("Enquête," which is not fair to translate into the lugubrious literalism, "Inquest"), Anthologies, and books that masquerade as books, as Charles Lamb hath it. Without a trace of pedantry or dogmatism, such works appear from time to time in Paris and are delightful reminders of the good breeding and suppleness of Gallic criticism. To turn to favour and prettiness a dusty department of literature is no mean feat.

What precisely is the condition of French letters since Catulle Mendès published his magisterial work on The French Poetic Movement from 1867 to 1900? (Paris, 1903.) Nothing so exhaustive has appeared since, though a half-dozen Inquiries, Anthologies, and Symposiums are in existence.

The most comprehensive recently is Florian-Parmentier's Contemporary History of French

Letters from 1885 to 1914. The author is a poet, one of les Jeunes, and an expert swimmer in the multifarious cross-currents of the day. His book is a bird's-eye view of the map of literary France as far as the beginning of the war. He is quite frank in his likes and dislikes, and always has his reasons for his major idolatries and minor detestations.

As a corrective to his enthusiasm and hatreds there are several new Anthologies at hand which aid us to form our own opinion of the younger men's prose and verse. And, finally, there is the significant Inquiry of Emile Henriot: "A Quoi Rêvent les Jeunes Gens?" (1913); of which more anon.

M. Florian-Parmentier is a native of Valenciennes, a writer whose versatility and fecundity are noteworthy in a far from barren literary epoch. He has, with the facility of a lettered young Frenchman, tried his hand at every form. All themes, so they be human, are welcome to him, from art criticism to playwriting. He is seemingly fair to his colleagues. Perhaps they may not admit this; but the question may be answered in the affirmative: Is he a safe critical guide in the labyrinth of latter-day French letters?

He notes, with an unaccustomed sense of humour in a critical barometer, the tendency of youthful poets, prose penmen, and others to form schools, to create cénacles, to begin fighting before they have any defined ideal.

It leads to a lot of noisy, explosive manifestoes, declarations, and challenges, most of them rather in the air; though it cannot be denied that these ebullitions of gusty temperaments do clear that same air, murky with theories and traversed by an occasional flash of genius.

After paying his respects to the daily Parisian press, which he belabours as venal, cynical, and impure, our critic evokes a picture of the condition of literary men; not a reassuring one. Indeed, we wonder how young people can dream of embracing such a profession, with its heartaches, disappointments, inevitable poverty. Unless these aspiring chaps have a private income, how do they contrive to live?

The answer is, they don't live, unless they write twaddle for the Grand Old Public, which must be tickled with fluff and flattery. You say to yourself, after all Paris is not vastly different in this respect from benighted New York. Detective stories, melodrama, the glorification of the stale triangle in fiction and drama, the apotheosis of the Apache — what are all these but slight variants of the artistic pabulum furnished by our native merchants in mediocrity? Consoled, because your mental and emotional climate is not as inartistic as it is painted, you return to Florian-Parmentier and his divagations. He has much to say. Some of it is not as tender as tripe, but none is salted with absurdity.

Then you make a discovery. There is in France a distinct class, the Intellectuals, who control artistic opinion because of its superior claims; a class to which there is no analogy either in England or in America. (The French Academy is not particularly referred to just now.) Poets, journalists, wealthy amateurs, bohemians, and professors — all may belong to it if they have the necessary credentials: brains, talent, enthusiasm. It is the latter quality that floats out on the sea of speculation many adventuring barks. Each sports a tiny pennant proclaiming its ideals. Each is steered by some dreamer of proud, impossible dreams. But they float, do these frail boats, laden with visions and captained by noble ambitions.

Or, another image; a long, narrow street, on either side houses of manifold styles — fantastic or sensible, castellated or commonplace, baroque, stately, turreted, spired, and lofty, these eclectic architectures reflect the souls of the dwellers within. The ivory tower is not missing, though a half-century ago it was more in evidence; the church is there, though sadly dwarfed — France is still spiritually crippled and flying on one wing (this means previous to 1914); and a host of other strange and familiar houses that Jack the poet built.

On the doors of each is a legend; it may be Neo-Symbolism, Neo-Classicism, Free-Verse, Sincerism, Intenseism, Spiritualists, Floralism or the School of Grace, Dramatism and Simul-

tanism, Imperialism, Dynamism, Futurism, Regionalism, Pluralism, Sereneism, Vivantism, Magism, Totalism, Subsequentism, Argonauts, Wolves, Visionarism, and, most discussed of all, Unanimism, headed by that fiery propagandist and poet, Jules Romains.

Now, every one of these cults in miniature has its following, its programmes, sometimes its special reviews, monthly or weekly. They are the numerous progeny of the elder Romantic, Realistic, and Symbolistic schools, long dead and gathered to their fathers.

Charles Baudelaire, from whose sonnet Correspondences the Symbolists dated; Baudelaire, the precursor of so much modern, is to-day chiefly studied in his prose writings, critical and æsthetic. His Little Poems in Prose are a breviary for the youths who are turning out an amorphous prose, which they call Free. Paul Verlaine's influence is still marked, for he is a maker of Debussy-like music; moonlit, vapourish, intangible, subtle, and perverse. The very quintessence of poetry haunts the vague terrain of his verse; but his ideas, his morbidities, these are negligible, indeed, abhorred.

The new schools, whether belonging to the Extreme Right or Extreme Left, are idealistic in their aim and practice; that or nothing. The brutalities of Zola and the Naturalistic School, the frigid perfection and metallic impassibility of the Parnassians are over and done with. Cynical cinders no longer blind the

eye of the ideal. There is a renaissance of sensibility. The universe is become pluralistic, sentimental pantheism is in the air. Irony has ceased to be a potent weapon in the armoury of poets and prosateurs. It is replaced by an ardent love of humanity, by a socialism that weeps on the shoulder of one's neighbour, by a horror of egoism — whether masquerading as a philosophy such as Nietzsche's, or a poesy such as the Parnassians. For these poetlings issues are cosmical.

Coeval with this revival of sentiment is a decided leaning toward religion; not the "white soul of the Middle Ages," as Huysmans would say; not the mediæval curiosities of Hugo, Gautier, Lamartine; but the carrying aloft of the banner of belief; the opposition to sterile agnosticism by the burning tongues of the holy spirit. No dilettante movement this return to Roman Catholicism. The time came for many of these neophytes when they had to choose at the cross-roads. Either — Or? The Button-Moulder was lying in wait for such adolescent Peer Gynts, and, outraged and nauseated by the gross license of their day and hour, by the ostentation of evil instincts, they turned to the right — some, not all of them. The others no longer cry aloud their pagan admiration of the nymph's flesh in the brake, of the seven deadly arts and their sister sins.

In a word, since 1905 a fresher, a more tonic air has been blowing across the housetops of

French art and literature. Science is too positive. Every monad has had its day. Pictorial impressionism is without skeleton. Mysticism is coming into fashion again; only, the youngsters wear theirs with a difference. Even the Cubists are working for formal severity, despite their geometrical fanaticism. Youth will have its fling, and joys in esoteric garb, in flaring colours, and those doors in the narrow street called "Perhaps," do but prove the eternal need of the new and the astounding. Man cannot live on manna alone. He must, to keep from volplaning to the infinite, go down and gnaw his daily bone. The forked human radish with the head fantastically carved has underpinnings also; else his chamber of dreams might overflow into reality, and then we should be converted in a trice to angels, pin-feathers and all.

What were the controlling factors in young French literature up to the greatest marking date of modern history, 1914? The philosophy of Henri Bergson is one; that philosophy, full of poetic impulsion, graceful phrasing, and charming evocations; a feminine, nervous, fleshless philosophy, though deriving, as it does, from an intellectual giant, Emile Boutroux. Maurice Barrès is another name to conjure with; once the incarnation of a philosophical and slightly cruel egoism; then the herald of regionalism, replacing the flinty determinism of Taine with the watch-words: Pa-

triotism, reverence for the dead — a reverence perilously near ancestor-worship — the prose-master Barrès went into the political arena, and became, notwithstanding his rather aggressive "modernism," an idealistic reactionary.

He is more subtle in his intellectual processes than his one-time master, Paul Bourget, from whom his psychology stemmed, and, if his patriotism occasionally becomes chauvinistic, his sincerity cannot be challenged. That sincerest form of insincerity — "moral earnestness," so called — has never been his. He is no more a sower of sand on the bleak and barren shore of negation. Little wonder he is accepted as a vital teacher.

Other names occur as generators of present schools. Stendhal, Mallarmé, Georges Rodenbach, Rimbaud — that stepfather of symbolism — Emil Verhaeren — who is truly an elemental and disquieting force — Paul Adam, Maeterlinck, the late Remy de Gourmont — who contributed so much to contemporary thought in the making — Francis Jammes, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Renard, Samain, Saint-Georges de Bouhelier, Jules Laforgue — and how many others, to be found in the pages of Vance Thompson's French Portraits, which valuable study dates back to the middle of the roaring nineties.

II

When we are confronted by a litany of strange names, by the intricate polyphony of literary sects and cénacles, the American lover of earlier French poets is bewildered, so swiftly does the whirligig of time bring new talents. Already the generation of 1900 has jostled from their place the "elders" of a decade previous: you read of Paul-Napoléon Roinard, Maurice Beaubourg, Hans Ryner — a remarkable writer — André Gide, Charles-Louis Philippe, of Paul Fort, Paul Claudel, André Suarès, Stéphane Servant, André Spire, Philéas Lebesgue, Georges Polti (whose Thirty-six Dramatic Situations deserves an English garb), and you recall some of them as potent creators of values.

But if London, a few hours from Paris, only hears of these men through a few critical intermediaries, such as Arthur Symons, Edmund Gosse, and other cultivated and cosmopolitan spirits, what may we not say of America, a week away from the scene of action? As a matter of fact, we are proud of our provincialism, and for those who "create" — as the jargon goes — that same provincialism is a windshield against the draughts of too tempting imitation; but for our criticism there is no excuse. A critic will never be a catholic critic of his native literature or art if he doesn't know the literatures and arts of other lands, paradoxical as this may sound. We lack æsthetic

curiosity. Because of our uncritical parochialism America is comparable to a cemetery of clichés.

Nevertheless, those of us who went as far as the portraits by Vance Thompson and Amy Lowell must feel a trifle strange in the long, narrow street of Florian-Parmentier, with its alternations of Septentrional mists and the blazing blue sky of the Midi. This critic, by the way, is a staunch upholder of the Gaul. He will have no admixture of Latin influence. He employs what has jocosely been called the "Woad" argument; he goes back not to the early Britons, but to Celticism. He is a sturdy Kymrist, and believes not in literatures transalpine or transpyrenean. He loathes the "pastiche," the purveyors of "canned" classics, the chilly rhetoricians who set too much store on conventional learning. A Frank, a northerner, and the originator of Impulsionism is Florian-Parmentier. In his auscultation of genius, La Physiologie Morale du Poète (1904), may be found the germs of his doctrine. This doctrine seems familiar enough now, as does the flux of Heraclitus and the Becoming of Renan, in the teachings of Bergson. Unanimism has had some influence. M. Florian-Parmentier does not admire this movement or its prophet, Jules Romains. Unanimism. Ah! the puissant magic of the word for these budding poets and philosophers. It ought to warm the cockles of the heart of critics.

And then the generation of 1900 — Alex-

ander Mercereau, Henri Hertz, Sébastien Voirol, Pierre Jaudon, Jacques Nayral, Fernand Divoire, Tancrède Visan, Strentz, Giraudoux, Mandin, Guillaume Apollinaire — all workers in the vast inane, dwellers on the threshold of the future. The past and present bearings of the Academy Goncourt are carefully indicated. Thus far nothing extraordinary has come from it. Balzac is still the mighty one in fiction. Thus far the names of Anatole France, Paul Adam, the brothers Rosny, Pierre Mille — a brilliant, versatile man — still maintain their primacy.

Thus far, among the essayists, Remy de Gourmont, Camille Mauclair, Maeterlinck, Romain Rolland, J. H. Fabre, Jules Bois — now sojourning in America and a thinker of verve and originality — and Henry Houssaye, hold their own against the younger generation.

In the theatre there are numerous and vexing tendencies: Maeterlinck, loyally acknowledging his indebtedness to gentle Charles van Lerburghe, created a spiritual drama and has disciples; but the theatre is the theatre and resists innovation. Ibsen, who had his day in Paris, and Antoine of the Free Theatre were accepted not because of their novelty, but in spite of it. They both were men of the theatre. There is a school of Ideo-realism, and there are Curel, Bataille, Porto-Riche, Maeterlinck, Trarieux, and Marie Leneru; but the technique of the drama is immutable.

In the domain of philosophy and experimental science we find Emile Boutroux, and such collective psychologists as Durckheim, Gustave le Bon, and Gabriel Tarde; names such as Binet, Ribot, Michel Savigny, Alfred Fouillée, and the eminent mathematician, Henri Poincaré — who finally became sceptical of his favourite logic, philosophy, and mathematics. This intellectual volte-face caused endless discussion. The truth is that intuition, the instinctive vs. intellectualism — what William James called "vicious intellectualism" — is swaying the younger French thinkers and poets.

There is, if one is to judge by the anthologies, far too much of metaphysics in contemporary poetry. Poetry is in danger of suffocating in a misty mid-region of metaphysics. The vital impulse, intuitionalism, and rhythmic flow of time in Bergson caught the fancy of the poets. Naturally enough. Literary dogmatism had prevailed too long in academic centres. Now it is the deliquescence of formal verse that is to be feared. Vers-libre, which began with such initiators as that astonishing prodigy, Arthur Rimbaud, has run the gamut from esoteric illuminism to sonorous yawping from the terrace of the brasseries. Have frogs wings? we are tempted to ask. Voices they have, but not bird-like voices.

That fascinating philosopher and friend of Remy de Gourmont — who practically introduced him — must not be overlooked, for he

had genuine influence. I refer to brilliant Jules Gaultier, who evolved from Flaubert's Madame Bovary the idea of his Bovarysme — which, succinctly stated, is the instinct in mankind to appear other than it is; from the philosopher to the snob, from the priest to the actor, from the duchess to the prostitute.

Of the influence of politics upon art and literature — which happily are no cloistered virtues in France — we need not speak here. M. Florian-Parmentier does so in his admirable and bulky book, of which we have only exposed the high lights.

Since Jules Huret's Enquête sur l'Evolution Littéraire (1890), followed by similar works of Vellay, Jean Muller, and Gaston Picard (1913), we recall no such pamphlet as Emile Henriot's, mentioned above. He put the questions: "Where are we? Where are we going?" in *Le Temps* of Paris, June, 1912, to a number of representative thinkers and poets, and reprinted between covers their answers in 1913.

The result is rather confusing, a cloud of contradictory witnesses are assembled, and what one affirms the other denies. There are no schools! Yes, there are groups! We are going to the devil headlong! The sky is full of rainbows and the humming of harps celestial! Better the extravagances of the decayed Romanticists than the debasing realism of the modern novel, cry the Symbolists. A plague on all your houses! say the Unanimists. One

fierce Wolf (Loup) admitted that at the banquets of his cénacle he and his fellow poets always ate in effigy the classic writers. Or was it at the Symbolists'? Does it much matter? The gesture counts alone with these youthful "Fumistes" — as Leconte de Lisle had christened their predecessors.

Verlaine, in his waggish mood, persisted in spelling as "Cymbalists" the Symbolists, his own followers. Gongs would have been a better word. A punster speaks of Theists as those who love "le bon Dieu and tea." The new critical school, at its head Charles Maurras, do not conceal their contempt for all these "arrivistes" and revolutionary groups, believing that only a classic renaissance will save Young France. Barnums, the entire lot! pronounces in faded accents the ultra-academic group. Three critics of wide-reaching influence are dead since the war began: Emile Faguet, Jules Lemaître, and Remy de Gourmont. They leave no successors worthy of their mettle.

III

The three volumes of anthology of French Contemporary Poets from 1866 to 1916 have been supplemented by a fourth entitled Poets of Yesterday and To-day (1916). Edited by the painstaking M. G. Walch, it comprises the verse of poets born as late as 1886. Among

the rest is the gifted Charles Dumas, who fell in battle, 1914. As epigraph to the new collection the editor has used a line from this poet's testament: "Ce désir d'être tout que j'appelle mon âme!" Another anthology of the new poets is prefaced by M. Gustave Lanson, but the Walch collection reveals more promising talents, or else the poems are more representative.

Signor Marinetti, who is bilingual, is eccentrically amusing. But are his contortions on the tripod art? The auto and aeroplane are celebrated, also steam, speed, mist, and the destruction of all art prior to 1900. The new schools are wary of rhetoric, thus following Paul Verlaine's injunction: Take Eloquence by the neck and wring it! Imagists abound, but they are in an aristocratic minority. The watchword is: sobriety in thinking and expression.

Strangely enough, two names emerge victoriously from the confusing lyric symphony and they are those of Belgian-born poets — Emile Verhaeren, whose tragic death last year was a loss to literature, and Maurice Maeterlinck. What living lyric poet has the incomparable power of that epical Verhaeren, unless it be that of the more sophisticated Gabriele d'Annunzio, or the sumptuous decorative verse of Henri de Régnier, whose polished art is the antithesis of the exuberant, lawless, resonant reverberations of Verhaeren?

What thinker and dramatist is known like

Maeterlinck, except it be the magical Gerhart Hauptmann? Rough to brutality — for Verhaeren at one time emulated Walt Whitman (variously spelled as "Walth" and "Withman"); with the names of foreigners Paris has ever been careless in its orthography, witness "Litz" and "Edgard Poë"; he can boast the divine afflatus. His personality is of the centrifugal order. He has a tumultuous rhythmic undertow that sweeps one irresistibly with him. But his genius is disintegrating, rather than constructive.

Of what French poet among the younger group dare we say the same? Grace, lyric sweetness, subtlety in ideas, facile technique — all these, yes, but not the power of saying great things greatly.

As for Maeterlinck, he owes something to Emerson; but his mellow wisdom and clairvoyance are his own. He is a seer, and his crepuscular pages are pools of glimmering incertitudes, whereas of Verhaeren we may say, as Carlyle said of Landor's prose: "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians."

Henry James tells a story of an argument between Zola, Flaubert, and Turgenev, the Russian novelist declaring that for him Châteaubriand was not the Ultima Thule of prose perfection. This insensibility to the finer nuances of the language angered and astounded Zola and Flaubert. They set it down

to the fact that none but a Frenchman can quite penetrate the inner sanctuary of his own language; which may be true, though I believe that for Turgenev the author of Atala was temperamentally distasteful.

Therefore, when an American makes the statement that the two Belgians are superior to the living Frenchmen it may be classed as a purely personal judgment. But the proposition first mooted by a distinguished critic, Remy de Gourmont, that Maeterlinck and Verhaeren be elected to the French Academy, was not a bizarre one. The war has effaced many artistic frontiers. The majority of the little circles that once pullulated in Paris no longer exist. Both Verhaeren and Maeterlinck are now Frenchmen of the French. Their inclusion in the Academy would have honoured that venerable and too august body as much as the Belgian poets.

As to the war's influence on French letters, that question is for soothsayers to decide, not for the present writer. After 1870 certain psychiatrists pretended that a degeneration of body and soul had blighted artistic and literary Europe. Well, we can only wish for the new France of 1920 and later such a galaxy of talents and genius as the shining groups from 1875 to 1914. No need to finger the chaplet of their names and achievements. Such books as those by Catulle Mendès, Florian-Parmentier, Lansom, and Walch prove our contention.

CHAPTER XXVI

MORE ABOUT RICHARD WAGNER

TIME was when a fame-craving young man could earn a reputation for originality by merely going to the market-place and loudly proclaiming his disbelief in a deity. It would seem that modern critics of Richard Wagner, busily engaged in placing the life of the composer under their microscopes, are seeking the laurels of the ambitious chap aforesaid.

Never has the music of Wagner been more popular than now; his name on the opera billboards is bound to crowd a house. And never, paradoxical as it may sound, has there been such a critical hue and cry over his works and personality. The publication of his autobiography has much to do with this renewal of interest. There is some praise, much abuse, to be found in the newly published books on the subject. European critics are building up little islands of theory, coral-like, some with fantastic lagoons, others founded on stern truth, and many doomed to be washed away over-night. Nevertheless, the true Richard Wagner is beginning to emerge from the haze of Nibelheim behind which he contrived to hide his real self.

Wagner the gigantic comedian; Wagner the

egotist; Wagner the victim of a tragic love, Wagner tone-poet, mock philosopher, and a wonderful apparition in the world of art till success overtook him; then Wagner become bored, with no more worlds to conquer, deserted by his best friends — whom he had alienated — without the solace of the men he had most loved, the men who had helped him over the thorny path of his life — Liszt, Nietzsche, Von Bülow, Otto Wesendonk, and how many others, even King Ludwig II, whom he had treated with characteristic ingratitude! No, Richard Wagner during the sterile years, so called, from 1866 to 1883, was not a contented man, despite his union with Cosima von Bülow-Liszt and the foundation of a home and family at Baireuth.

I

However, there are exceptions. One is the book of Otto Bournot entitled Ludwig Geyer, the Stepfather of Richard Wagner. I wrote about it in 1913 for the *New York Times*. In this slender volume of only seventy-two pages the author sifts all the evidence in the Geyer-Wagner question, and he has delved into archives, into the newspapers of Geyer's days, and has had access to hitherto untouched material. It must be admitted that his conclusions are not to be lightly denied. August Böttiger's Necrology has until recently been

the chief source of facts in the career of Geyer, but Wagner's Autobiography — which in spots Bournot corrects — and the life of Wagner by Mary Burrell, not to mention other books, have furnished Bournot with new weapons.

The Geyers as far back as 1700 were simple pious folk, the first of the family being a certain Benjamin Geyer, who about 1700 was a trombone-player and organist. Indeed, the chief occupation of many Geyers was in some way or other connected with the Evangelical Church. Ludwig Heinrich Christian Geyer was a portraitist of no mean merit, an actor of considerable power — his Franz Moor was a favourite rôle with the public — a dramatist of fair ability (he wrote a tragedy, among others, named The Slaughter of the Innocents), and also a verse-maker. His acquaintance with Weber stimulated his interest in music; Weber discovered his voice, and he sang in opera. Truly a versatile man who displayed in miniature all the qualities of Wagner. The latter was too young at the time of Geyer's death, September, 1821, to have profited much by the precepts of his stepfather, but his example certainly did prove stimulating to the imagination of the budding poet and composer. Geyer married Johanna Wagner-Bertz (Mary Burrell was the first to give the correct spelling of her maiden name), the widow of the police functionary Wagner (to whose memory Richard pays such cynical homage in his obituary),

August 14, 1814. She had about two hundred and sixty-one thalern, and eight children. A ninth came later in the person of Cäcile, who afterward married a member of the Avenarius family. Cäcile, or Cicely, was a prime favourite with Richard.

Seven years passed, and again Frau Geyer found herself a widow, with nine children and little money. How the family all tumbled up in the world, owing much to the courage, wit, vivacity, and unshaken will-power of their mother, may be found in the autobiography. Bournot admits that Geyer and his wife may have carried to the grave certain secrets. Richard Wagner until he was nine years old was known as Richard Geyer, and on page thirteen of his book our author prints the following significant sentence: "The possibility of Wagner's descent from Geyer contains in itself nothing detrimental to our judgment of the art-work of Baireuth."

II

In 1900 a twenty-page pamphlet bearing the title Richard Wagner in Zurich was published in Leipsic. It was signed Hans Bélart, and gave for the first time to a much mystified world the story of Wagner's passion for Mathilde Wesendonk, thus shattering beyond hope of repair our cherished belief that

Cosima von Bülow-Liszt had been the lodestone of Wagner's desire, that to her influence was due the creation of Tristan and Isolde, its composer's high-water mark in poetic, dramatic music. Now, Bélart, not content with his iconoclastic pamphlet, has just sent forth a fat book which he calls Richard Wagner's Love-Tragedy with Mathilde Wesendonk.

We had thought that the last word in the matter had been said when Baireuth (Queen Cosima I) allowed the publication of Wagner's diaries and love-letters to Mathilde — though her complete correspondence is as yet unpublished. But Bélart is one of the busiest among the German critical coral builders. He has dug into musty newspapers and letters, and gives at the close of his work a long list of authorities. Yet nothing startlingly new comes out of his researches. We knew that Mathilde Wesendonk (or Wesendonck) was the first love of Wagner, a genuine and noble passion, not his usual self-seeking philandering. We also knew that Otto Wesendonk behaved like a patient husband and a gentleman — any other man would have put a bullet in the body of the thrice impertinent genius; knew, too, that Tristan and Isolde was born of this romance. But there is a mass of fresh details, petty backstairs gossip, all the tittle-tattle beloved of such writers, that in company with Julius Kapp's Wagner und die Frauen, makes Bélart's new book a valuable one for reference.

Kapp, who has written a life of Franz Liszt, goes Bélart one better in hinting that the infatuated couple transformed their idealism into realism. Bélart does not believe this; neither does Emil Ludwig, the latest critical commentator on Wagner. But neither critic gives the profoundest proof that the love of Richard and Mathilde was an exalted, platonic one, *i. e.*, the proof psychologic. I firmly believe that if Mathilde Wesendonk had eloped with Wagner in 1858, as he begged her to do, Tristan and Isolde might not have been finished; at all events, the third act would not have been what it now is. A mighty longing is better for the birth of great art than facile happiness. For the first time in his selfish unhappy life Wagner realised Goethe's words of wisdom: "Renounce thou shalt; shalt renounce." It was a bitter sacrifice, but out of its bitter sweetness came the honey and moonlight of Tristan and Isolde. Wagner suffered, Mathilde suffered, Otto Wesendonk suffered, and last, but not least, Minna Wagner, the poor pawn in his married game, suffered to distraction. Let us begin with a quotation on the last page but three of Bélart's book: "Remarked Otto Wesendonk to a friend: 'I have hunted Wagner from my threshold. . . .'"

This was in August, 1858. Wagner first met the Wesendonks about 1852, three years after he had fled to Zurich from Dresden because of his participation in the uprising of

1849. (Wagner as amateur revolutionist!) Thanks to the request of his wife Mathilde, Otto Wesendonk furnished a little house on the hill near his splendid villa for the Wagners. First christened "Fafner's Repose," Wagner changed the title to the "Asyl," and for a time it was truly an asylum for this perturbed spirit.

But he must needs fall deeply in love with his charming and beautiful neighbour, a woman of intellectual and poetic gifts, and to the chagrin of her husband and of Wagner's faithful wife. The gossip in the neighbourhood was considerable, for the complete frankness of the infatuated ones was not the least curious part of the affair. Liszt knew of it, so did the Princess Layn-Wittgenstein. An immense amount of "snooping" was indulged in by interested lady friends of Minna Wagner. She has her apologists, and, judging from the letters she wrote at the time and afterward — several printed for the first time by Kapp and Bélart — she took a lively hand in the general proceedings. Evidently she was tired of her good man's behaviour, and when he solemnly assured her that it was the master-passion of his life she didn't believe him. Naturally not. He had cried "wolf" too often; besides, Minna, like a practical person, viewed the possibility of a rupture with Otto Wesendonk as a distinct misfortune. Otto had not only advanced much money to Richard, but he paid twelve thousand francs for the scores of Rheingold

and Walküre and for the complete performing rights. Afterward he sent both to King Ludwig II as a gift — but I doubt if he ever got a penny from his tenants for rent. He also defrayed the expenses of the Wagner concert at Zurich, a little item of nine thousand francs. Scandal and calumny invaded his home, the fair fame of his wife was threatened. No wonder the finale, long deferred, was stormy, even operatic.

The lady was much younger than her husband; she was born at the close of 1828, therefore Wagner's junior by fifteen years. She was a Luckemeyer, her mother a Stein; a cultured, sweet-natured woman, it is more than doubtful if she could have endured Wagner as a husband. She did a wise thing in resisting his prayers. Not only was her husband a bar to such a proceeding, but her children would have always prevented her thinking of a legal separation. All sorts of plans were in the air. When, in 1857, the American panic seriously threatened the prosperity of Otto Wesendonk, who had heavy business interests in New York, gossip averred that Frau Wesendonk would ask for a divorce; but the air cleared and matters resumed their old aspect. Minna Wagner's health, always poor, became worse. It was a case of exasperated nerves made worse by drugs. She daily made scenes at home and threatened to tell what she knew. That she knew much is evident from her correspondence with Frau

Wilk. She said that Wagner had two hearts, but while he delighted in intellectual and emotional friendship with such a superior soul as Mathilde, he nevertheless would not forego the domestic comforts provided by Minna. Like many another genius, Wagner was bourgeois. Those intolerable dogs, the parrot, the coffee-drinking, the soft beds and solicitude about his underclothing, all were truly German; human-all-too-human.

In September, 1857, the newly married Von Bülows paid the Wagners a visit, and as the guest-chamber of the cottage was occupied they took up temporary quarters at an inn, "The Raven" (Wotan's ravens!) Cosima, young, impressionable, turned her face to the wall and wept when Wagner played and sang for his friends the first and second acts of Siegfried. Even then she felt the "pull" of his magnetism, of his genius, and doubtless regretted having married the fussy, irritable Von Bülow — who had gone down in the social scale in wedding a girl of dubious descent. (In Paris Liszt for many years was only a strolling gipsy piano-player to whom the Countess d'Agoult had "condescended.")

Mathilde Wesendonk entertained the Von Bülows, who went away pleased with their reception, above all deeply impressed by the exiled Wagner. They so reported to Liszt, and Von Bülow did more; as the scion of an old aristocratic family, he made many attempts

to secure an amnesty for Wagner, as well as making propaganda for his music. Which favours Wagner, who was the very genius of ingratitude, repaid later.

In one point Herr Ludwig is absolutely correct: the composer was supported by his friends from 1849 to the year when King Ludwig intervened. The starvation talk was a part of the Wagner legend, even the Paris days were greatly exaggerated as to their black poverty. Wagner was always a spendthrift.

From November, 1857, to May, 1858, Wagner set to music the five poems of Mathilde, veritable sketches for Tristan. Early in September, 1857, the relations between Minna and Mathilde had become strained. Wagner accused his wife of abusing Mathilde in a vulgar manner; worse remained; he had sent a letter by the gardener to Frau Wesendonk and the jealous wife intercepted it, broke the seal, read the contents. To Wagner, this was the blackest of crimes; yet can you blame her? To be sure, she had no conception of her husband's genius. For her Rienzi was his only work. Had it not succeeded? So had Tannhäuser and Lohengrin, also The Flying Dutchman, but Rienzi was her darling. How often she begged him to write another opera of the same Wagnerian calibre he has not failed to tell us. Otto Wesendonk's wife she firmly believed was leading him into a quagmire. What theatre could ever produce The Ring?

One thing, however, Minna did not do, as most writers on the subject say she did: she did not show the fatal letter to Wesendonk at the time, but only to Wagner. Later she made its meanings clear to the injured husband, which no doubt provoked the explosive phrase quoted above.

The youthful Karl Tausig, bearing credentials from Liszt, appeared on the scene in May, 1858, and the entire household was soon in an uproar. Luckily, Wagner had persuaded Minna to take a cold-water cure at a sanatorium some distance from Zurich, so he could handle the wild-eyed Tausig, whose volcanic piano performances at the age of sixteen made the mature composer both wonder and admire. Tausig smoked black cigars, a trait he imitated from Liszt, and almost lived on coffee. Here is a curious criticism of him made by Cosima Von Bülow, who, it must be remembered, was both the daughter and wife of famous pianists. She said: "Tausig has no touch, no individuality; he is a caricature of Liszt." This, in the light of Tausig's subsequent artistic career, sounds almost comical; it also shows the intensely one-sided temperament of a remarkable woman, who banished from her life both von Bülow and her father, Franz Liszt, when Wagner entered into her dreams. The fortitude she displayed after her Richard's death in 1883 was not tempered by any human feeling

toward her father. His telegrams were unanswered. She denied herself to him. She became a Brünnhilde frozen into a symbol of intolerable grief.

Of her personal fascination the sister of Nietzsche, Elizabeth Foerster-Nietzsche, told me, when I last saw her at Weimar. Von Bülow succumbed to this charm; Rubinstein also (query: perhaps that is the reason he so savagely abused Wagner in his Conversations on Music?), and, if gossip doesn't lie, Nietzsche was another victim.

On September 17, 1858, after a general row, Wagner left his home on the green hill, his "Asyl," for ever. Why? Plenty of conjectures, no definite statements. He makes a great show of frankness in his diaries, in his autobiography; but they were obviously "edited" by Baireuth. Tristan and Isolde remains as evidence that a mighty emotion had transfigured the nature of a genius, and instead of an erotic anecdote the world of art is richer in the possession of a moving drama of desire and woe and tragedy. At the Berlin première of Tristan the old Kaiser Wilhelm remarked: "How Wagner must have loved when he wrote the work;" which is sound psychology.

III

The two books discussed are constructive in nature; not so the book by Emil Ludwig, Wagner, or the Disenchanted, which is frankly destructive. Since The Wagner Case by Nietzsche — and not Nietzsche at his best — there has not been written a book so overflowing with hatred for Wagner, the man as well as the musician. Ludwig is the author of poems, plays, and a study of Bismarck, the latter a noteworthy achievement. He is thorough in his attacks, though he does not measure up to Ernest Newman in his analysis of Wagner's poetry, libretti, and philosophy. The English critic's studies remain the best of its kind, because it is written without parti-pris.

Ludwig slashes à la Nietzsche, though he cannot boast that poet's diamantine style. He accuses Wagner of being paroxysmal, erotic — a painter of moods; he couldn't build a Greek temple like Beethoven — weak as a poet, inconclusive as a musician. For Tristan and Die Meistersinger he has words of hearty praise. The Ludwig book stirred up a nest of hornets, and one lawsuit resulted. A newspaper critic presumed to criticise, and the sensitive poet, who calls Wagner every bad name in the Schimpf Lexicon, invoked the aid of the law. We know only too well, thanks to that ill-tasting but engrossing autobiography, that Wagner was a

monster of ingratitude. Hasn't Nietzsche, against his own natural feeling, proclaimed the futility of gratitude? Perhaps he learned this lesson from his hard experience with Wagner. We also know that Wagner wanted to run the universe, but after a brief note from Ludwig II he left Munich rather than face the angry burghers.

He attempted to coerce Bismarck, but there he ran up against a wall of granite. Bismarck was a Beethoven lover, and he abhorred, as did Von Beust, revolutionists. Thereat Wagner wrote sarcastic things about the uselessness and vanity of statesmen. He didn't treat Ludwig II right when he announced from Venice that he wasn't in sufficient health and spirits to grant the King's request for a performance of the prelude to Lohengrin in a darkened theatre with one listener, Ludwig II. (By the way, Ludwig II never sat through a performance alone of Parsifal. Once and once only, years before the completion of the work, he heard a performance of the prelude in Munich given for his sole benefit.) Wagner's gruff letter wounded the sensitive idealist. In 1866, a few weeks after the death of Minna Wagner-Planer, Cosima von Bülow-Liszt followed Wagner to Switzerland. Probably the hostile attitude of Liszt in the affair was largely inspired by the fact that when Richard and Cosima married, the latter abjured Catholicism and became a Protestant. Liszt, a religious man

(despite his pyrotechnical virtuosity in the luxurious region of sentiment), never could reconcile himself to this defection on the part of a beloved child.

It angered Nietzsche to discover in Wagner a leaning toward mysticism, toward religion: witness the mock-duck mysticism and burlesque of religious ritual in Parsifal. After Feuerbach came Arthur Schopenhauer in the intellectual life of Wagner. This was in 1854. His friend Wille lent him the book. Immediately he started to "Schopenhauerise" the Ring, thereby making a hopeless muddle of situation and character. The enormous vitality of Wagner's temperament expressed itself in essentially optimistic terms. He was not a pessimist, and he hopelessly misunderstood his new master. Wotan must needs become a Schopenhauerian; and Siegfried, a pessimist at the close.

Nietzsche was right; Schopenhauer proved a powerful poison for Wagner. And Schopenhauer himself laughed at Wagner's music; he remained true to Rossini and Mozart and advised Wagner, through a friend, to stick to the theatre and hang his music on a nail in the wall; but when his library was overhauled several marginalia were discovered, one which he contemptuously wrote on a verse of Wagner's: "Ear! Ear! Where are your ears, musician?"

Wagner, when Liszt adjured him to turn to religion as a consolation, replied: "I believe only in mankind." Ludwig compares this

declaration with some of the latter opinions concerning Christianity, of which Wagner has said many evil things. Wagner's life was a series of concessions to the inevitable. He modified his art theories as he grew older, and with fame and riches his character deteriorated.

He couldn't stand success — he, the bravest man of his day; the undaunted fighter for an idea crooked the knee to caste, became an amateur mystic and announced his intention of returning to absolute music, of writing a symphony strict in form — which, for his reputation, he luckily did not attempt. He was a colossal actor and the best self-advertiser the world has yet known since Nero. But I can't understand Herr Ludwig when he asserts that from 1866 to 1883 the composer did nothing but compose two marches, finish Siegfried and Götterdämmerung. Rather a large order, considering the labours of the man as practical opera conductor, prose writer, poet-dramatist, and composer. And then, too, the gigantic scheme of Baireuth was realised in 1876.

Comparatively barren would be a fairer phrase. After Tristan and Isolde, what could any man compose? A work which its creator rightfully said was a miracle he couldn't understand. After the anecdotage of Wagner's career is forgotten, after Baireuth has become owl-haunted, Tristan and Isolde will be listened to by men and women who love or have loved.

It isn't pleasant to read a book like Ludwig's,

truthful as it may be in parts. Nor should he call our attention to the posthumous venom of the composer as expressed in his hateful remarks concerning Otto Wesendonk. There Wagner was his own Mime, his own Alberich, not the knightly hero who would not woo the fair Irish maid till magic did melt his will. Richard Wagner was once Tristan.

CHAPTER XXVII

MY FIRST MUSICAL ADVENTURE

MUSIC-MAD, I arrived in Paris during the last weeks of the World's Fair of 1878, impelled there by a parching desire to see Franz Liszt, if not to hear him. He was then honorary director of the Austro-Hungarian section. But I could not find him, although I heard of him everywhere, of musical fêtes and the usual glittering company that had always surrounded this extraordinary son of fortune. One day I fancied I saw him. I was sadly walking the Rue de Rivoli of an October afternoon, when in a passing carriage I saw an old chap with bushy white hair, his face full of expressive warts, and in his mouth a long black cigar, which he was furiously puffing. Liszt! I gasped, and started in pursuit. It was not an easy job to keep up with the carriage. At last, because of a blocked procession, I caught up and took a long stare, the object of which composedly smiled at me, but did not truly convince me that he was Franz Liszt. You see there were so many different pictures of him; even the warts were not always the same in number. When I am in the Cambyses vein I swear I've seen Liszt. Perhaps I did.

Liszt or no Liszt, my ambition was fired, and at the advice of Frederick Boscovitz, a pupil of Liszt and cousin of Rafael Joseffy, I went to the Conservatoire Nationale, with a letter of introduction to the acting secretary, Emile Rety. I was told that I was too old to enter, being a few months past eighteen. I was disappointed and voiced my woes to Lucy Hamilton Hooper, then a clever writer and correspondent of several American newspapers. Her husband was Vice-Consul Robert Hooper and he kindly introduced me to General Fairchild, the consul, and after a cross-examination I was given a letter in which the United States Government testified to my good social standing (I was not a bandit, nor yet an absconder from justice) and extreme youth. Armed with this formidable document, I again besieged the gates of the great French conservatoire — whose tuition, it must be remembered, is free. I was successful, inasmuch as I was permitted to present myself at the yearly examination, which took place November 13 (ominous date). To say that I studied hard and shook in my boots is a literal statement. I lived at the time in an alley-like street off the Boulevard des Batignolles and lived luxuriously on five dollars a week, eating one satisfying meal a day (with a hot bowl of coffee in the morning) and practising on a wretched little cottage piano as long as my neighbours would stand the noise. They chucked boots or any old faggot they could

find at my door, and after twelve hours I was so tired of patrolling the keyboard that I was glad to stop. Then, a pillow on my stomach to keep down the pangs of a youthfully gorgeous appetite, I would lie in bed till dinner-time. O Chopin! O consommé and boiled beef! O sour blue wine at six cents the litre!

At last the fatal day dawned, as the novelists say. It was nasty, chilling, foggy autumnal, but my long locks hung negligently and my velveteen coat was worn defiantly open to the wind. I reached the Conservatoire — then in the old building on the Rue du Faubourg Poissonière — at precisely nine o'clock of the morn. I was put in a large room with an indiscriminate lot of candidates, some of them so young as to be fit for the care of a nurse. Like lost sheep we huddled and as my eyes feverishly rambled I noticed a lad of about twelve with curling hair worn artist fashion; a naughty haughty boy he was, for he sneered at my lengthy legs and audibly inquired: "Is grandpa to play with us!" I knew enough French to hate that little monster with a nervous hatred. There was a tightened feeling about my throat and heart and I waited in an agitated spirit for my number. A bearded and shy young man came in from examination and was at once mocked by the incipient virtuoso in pantalettes. Another unfortunate, with a roll of music! Then the little devil was summoned. We sat up. In ten minutes he returned with downcast mien, flushed

face, tears in his eyes, and tried to sneak out of the room, but too late. After shaking hands all round we solemnly danced in a circle about the now sobbing and no longer sinister child. Who says youth is ever generous?

"Number thirteen!" sang out a voice, and I was pushed through a narrow entry and a minute later was standing on the historic stage of the Paris Conservatoire. The lighting was dim, but I discerned a group of persons somewhere in front of me. A man asked me to sit down at the grand piano — of course, like most pianos, out of tune — and I tremblingly obeyed his polite request. At this juncture a woman's voice inquired: "How old are you, monsieur?" I told her. A feminine laugh rippled through the gloom, for I wore a fluffy little beard, was undeniably gawky, and looked conspicuously older than my years. That laugh settled me. Queer, creepy feelings seized my legs, my eyes were full of solar spectrums, my throat a furnace and my heart beat like a triphammer. I was not the first man, young or old, to be knocked out by a woman's laugh. (Later I met the lady. She was Madame Massart, and the wife of the well-known violin master, Massart, of the Conservatoire.) Again the demand, "Play something." It was a foregone conclusion that I couldn't. I began a minuetto from a Beethoven Sonata, hesitated, saw fiery snakes and a kaleidoscope of comets, then pitched into a presto by the unfortunate Beethoven, and was

soon stopped. A sheet of manuscript was placed before me. I could have sworn that it was upside down, so as a sight-reading test it was a failure. I was altogether a distinguished failure, and with the audible comment of the examining faculty ringing in my ears, I stumbled across the stage into welcome darkness, and without waiting to thank Secretary Rety for his amiability I got away, crossing in a hurry that celebrated courtyard in which the hideous noises made by many instruments, including the human voice, reminded me of a torture circle in Dante's Inferno.

The United States had no reason to be proud of her musical — or unmusical — son that dull day in November, 1878. When I arrived in my garret I swore I was through and seriously thought of studying the xylophone. But my mood of profound discouragement was succeeded by a more hopeful one. If you can't enter the Paris Conservatoire as an active student you may have influence enough to become an "auditeur," a listener; and a listener I became and in the class of Professor Georges Mathias, a genuine pupil of Chopin. My musical readers will understand my good luck. From that spiritual master I learned many things about the Polish composer; heard from his still supple fingers much music as Chopin had interpreted it. Delicate and discriminating in style, M. Mathias had never developed into a brilliant concert pianist; sometimes he pro-

duced effects on the keyboard that sounded like emotional porcelain falling from a high shelf and melodiously shattering on velvet mirrors. He also taught me that if a pianist or violinist or singer is too nervous before the public, then he or she has not a musical vocation — the case of Adolf Henselt to the contrary notwithstanding. But better would it be for me to admit that I failed because I didn't will earnestly enough to succeed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

VIOLINISTS NOW AND YESTERYEAR

WITH the hair of the horse and the entrails of the cat, magicians of the four strings weave their potent spells. What other instrument devised by the hand of man has ever approached the violin? Gladstone compared it with the locomotive; yet complete as is the mechanism of the wheeled monster, its type is transitional; steam is already supplanted by electricity; while the violin is perfection, as perfect as a sonnet, and in its capacity for the expression of emotion next to the human voice; indeed it is even more poignant. Orchestrally massed, it can be as terribly beautiful as an army with banners. In quartet form it represents the very soul of music; it is both sensuous and intellectual. The modern grand pianoforte with its great range, its opulence of tone, its delicacy of mechanism is, nevertheless, a monster of music if placed beside the violin, with its simple curves, its almost primitive method of music-making. The scraping of one substance against another goes back to prehistoric times, nay, may be seen in the grasshopper and its ingenious manner of producing sound. But

the violin, as we know it to-day, is not such an old invention; it was the middle of the sixteenth century before it made its appearance, with its varnished and modelled back.

Restricted as is its range of dynamics, the violin has had for its votaries men of such widely differing temperaments as Paganini and Spohr, Wilhelmj and Sarasate, Joachim and Ysaye. Its literature does not compare with that of the piano, for which Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, and Brahms have written their choicest music, yet the intimate nature of the violin, its capacity for passionate emotion, crowns it — and not the organ, with its mechanical tonal effects — as the king of instruments. Nor does the voice make the peculiar appeal of the violin. Its lowest note is the G below the treble clef, and its top note a mere squeak; but it seems in a few octaves to have imprisoned within its wooden walls a miniature world of feeling; even in the hands of a clumsy amateur it has the formidable power of giving pain; while in the grasp of a master it is capable of arousing the soul.

No other instrument has the ecstatic quality; neither the shallow-toned pianoforte, nor the more mellow and sonorous violoncello. The angelic, demoniacal, lovely, intense tones of the violin are without parallel in music or nature. It is as if this box with four strings across its varnished belly had a rarer nervous system than all other instruments. It is a

cry, a shriek, a hymn to heaven, a call to arms, an exquisite evocation, a brilliant series of multi-coloured visions, a broad song of passion, or mocking laughter — what cannot the violin express if the soul that guides it be that of an artist? Otherwise, it is only a fiddle. It is the hero, the heroine, the vanguard of every composition. As a solo instrument in a concerto, its still small voice is heard above the din and thunder of the accompaniment. In a word, this tiny music-box is the ruler among instruments.

Times have changed since 1658 in England, when the following delightful ordinance was made for the benefit of musical genius, or otherwise:

"And be it enacted that if any person or persons, commonly called Fiddlers, or minstrels, shall at any time after the said first of July be taken playing, fiddling, or making music in any inn, alehouse or tavern, or shall be proffering themselves, or desiring, or entreating any person or persons to hear them play . . . shall be adjudged rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars."

Decidedly, England was not then the abode of the muses, for the poor actor suffered in company with the musician. You wonder whether this same penalty would be imposed upon musical managers . . . they certainly do "entreat" the public to listen to their "fiddlers." Yet in 1690 when Corelli, the father of violin

playing, led the band at Cardinal Ottoboni's house in Rome, he stopped the music because his churchly patron was talking, and he made an epigram that has since served for other artists: "Monsignore," remarked this intrepid musician, when asked why the band had ceased, "I feared the music might interrupt the conversation." How well Liszt knew this anecdote may be recalled by his retort to a czar of Russia under similar circumstances.

Until a few months ago I had not heard Eugene Ysaye play for years. In the old days he had enchanted my ears, and in company with Gerardy, the violoncellist and Pugno the pianist had made music fit for the gods. Considering the flight of the years, I found the art of the Belgian comparatively untouched. Like Liszt, like Paderewski, Ysaye has his good moments and his indifferent. He is the Paderewski of the strings in his magical interpretations. And unlike his younger contemporaries, he still carves out the whole block of the great classics, sonatas, and concertos. He plays little things tenderly, exquisitely, and the man is first the musician, then the virtuoso.

I heard neither Paganini nor Spohr. Joachim, Wilhelmj, Wieniawski, and Ysaye I have heard and seen. My memory assures me of keener satisfactions than any book about these giants of the four strings could give me. The first violinist I ever listened to was in the early seven-

ties. I was hardly at the age of musical discrimination. Yet I remember much. It was at the opera, a matinee in the Philadelphia Academy of Music. Nilsson was singing. I can't recall her on that occasion, though it seems only the other day when Carlotta Patti sang the Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute, and limped over the stage — possibly the lameness fixed the event in my mind more than the music.

A "front" set was dropped between the acts at this particular matinee — I do not recollect the name of the opera — and through a "practicable" door came an old gentleman with a violin in his hands. He was white-haired, he wore white side-whiskers, and he looked to my young eyes like a prosperous banker. He played. It was as the sound of falling waters on a moonlight night. I asked the name of the old gentleman. My father said, "Henri Vieuxtemps," which told me nothing then, though it means much to me now. What did he play? I do not know. Yet whenever I hear the younger men attack his Fantaisie Caprice, his Ballade and Polonaise, his Concertos, I think proudly: "I have heard Vieuxtemps!" He was a Belgian, born 1820, died 1881. His style was finished, elegant, charming. He was a pupil of De Beriot and represented, with his master, perfection in the Belgian school.

After an interval of some years, I heard the

only pupil of Paganini, as he called himself, Camillo Sivori. It was in Paris, 1879. The precise day I can't say but my letter from Paris which appeared in the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin* was dated January 31, 1879. I still preserve it in a venerable scrap-book. I was in my 'teens but I wrote with the courage of youthful ignorance as follows: (It almost sounds like a musical criticism.) "Although it was generally supposed that Sivori, the great violinist, would not play this season in Paris, he, nevertheless delighted a large audience, last Sunday, at the Concert Populaire, with his lovely music. He is no longer a young man, but the vigour and fire of his playing are immense. He gave, with the orchestral accompaniment, a Berceuse, his own composition, with unapproachable delicacy. It was played throughout with the mute. In contrast came a Mouvement Perpetuel. Sivori's tone is not like that of Joachim or Wilhelmj, but it is sweeter than either. It reminds one of gold drawn to cobweb fineness. As an encore he played the too well known Carnival of Venice. That it was given in the style of his illustrious master, Paganini, who may say? But it was amazing, painful, finally tiresome." That same season I heard Anna Bock, Boscovitz, Diémer, Planté, Theodore Ritter, the two Jaells, fat Alfred and his thin wife.

Sivori (1815–1894), dapper, modest, stood up in the vast spaces of the Cirque d'Hiver,

which was engaged every Sunday by Jacques Pasdeloup and his orchestra. (Jacob Wolfgang was the real name of this conductor who braved the wrath of his audiences by putting Wagner on his programmes; and one afternoon we had a pitched battle over Rimsky-Korsakoff's Symphonic Poem, Sadko.) Sivori played a tarantella; every tone was clearly heard in the great, crowded auditorium. Pupils of De Bériot and Paganini I have heard, though I hardly recall the style of the former and nothing of the latter. But there was little of Paganini's fiery attack in Sivori; possibly he was too old. Fire and fury I later found in Wieniawski.

I must not omit the name of Ole Bull (1810–1880), for, though I heard him as a boy, I best remember him in 1880, when he gave his last concerts in America. In the fifties, while on a visit to my father's house, he went on his two thumbs around a dining-table, lifting his body clear from the ground. His muscular power was remarkable. It showed in the dynamics of his robust and sentimental playing. Spohr discouraged him as a boy, but later spoke of his "wonderful playing and sureness of his left hand; unfortunately, like Paganini, he sacrifices what is artistic to something that is not quite suitable to the noble instrument. His tone, too, is bad. . . ." For Spohr any one's tone was, naturally enough, bad, as he possessed the most monumental tone that ever came from a violin.

The truth is that Ole Bull was not a classical player; as I remember him, he could not play in strict tempo; like Chopin, he indulged in the rubato and abused the portamento. But he knew his public. America a half-century ago, particularly in the regions he visited, was not in the mood for sonatas or concertos. Old Dan Tucker and the Arkansaw Traveller were the mode. Bull played them both, played jigs and old tunes, roused the echoes with the Star Spangled Banner and Irish melodies. He played such things beautifully, and it would have been musical snobbery to say that you didn't like them. You couldn't help yourself. The grand old fellow bewitched you. He was a handsome Merlin, with a touch of the charlatan and a touch of Liszt in his tall, willowy figure, small waist, and heavy head of hair. Such white hair! It tumbled in masses about his kindly face like one of his native Norwegian cataracts. He was the most picturesque old man I ever saw except Walt Whitman, at that time a steady attendant of the Carl Gaertner String Quartet concerts in Philadelphia. (And what Walt didn't know about music he made up in his love for stray dogs; he was seldom without canine company.)

Those were the days when Prume's La Mélancolie and Wieniawski's Légende were the two favourite, yet remote, peaks of the student's répertoire. How we loved them! Then came Wieniawski with Rubinstein in 1872–1873,

and such violin playing America had never before heard — nor has it since, let me hasten to add. This Pole (1835–1880) was a brilliant master. His dash and fire and pathos carried you off your feet. His tone at times was like molten metal. He had a caressing and martial bow. His technique was infallible, his temperament truly Slavic, languorous, subtle, fierce. Wieniawski always reminded me of a red-hot coal. How chivalric is his Polonaise — that old war-horse! How elegiac his Légende! His favourite pupil was Leopold Lichtenberg, the greatest violin talent that has been thus far unearthed in America. Lichtenberg had everything when a youth — temperament, brains, musical feeling, and great technical ability.

After Wieniawski followed Wilhelmj, who did not efface his memory, but plunged one into another atmosphere; that of the calm, profound, untroubled, and classic. No doubt Spohr's tone was larger, yet this is difficult to believe. Wilhelmj drew from his instrument the noblest sounds I ever heard; not Joachim, not Ysaye excelled him in cantabile. He was the first to play Wagner transcriptions — no wonder Wagner made him leader of the strings at Bayreuth in 1876. How he read the Beethoven Concerto, the Bach Chaconne. Or the D flat Nocturne of Chopin — in D. Or the much abused Mendelssohn E Minor Concerto — with Max Vogrich accompanying him at

the piano. A giant in physique, when he faced his audience there was something of the majestic, fair-haired god Wotan in his immobile posture. He never appealed to his public as did Wieniawski; there was always something of chilly grandeur and remoteness in Wilhelmj's play. The last time I saw him was at Marienbad, shortly before his death, where, a stooped-shouldered, grey-haired old man, he was taking a Kur. He walked slowly, his hands clasped behind him, in his eyes the vacant look of one busy with memories. He reminded me of Beethoven's pictures.

Joseph Joachim, that mighty Hungarian, was past his prime when I heard him in London. He played out of tune — some of his pupils have imitated his failing — but whether in a Beethoven quartet, concerto, sonata with piano, he always stamped on your consciousness that Joseph Joachim was the greatest violinist that had ever lived. This is, of course, absurd, this unfair comparison of one artist with another. Yet it is human to compare, and if a violinist can evoke such a vision of perfection, then he must be of uncommon powers. Maud Powell, a distinguished pupil of Joachim, has asserted that it took her three years before she could recover herself in the presence of Joachim's overwhelming personality. Yet he struck me as not at all assertive. He seemed an "objective" player, *i. e.*, you thought only of Beethoven, of Brahms, as he calmly delivered himself of their

Olympian measures. The grand manner is now out of fashion. We care more for exotic rhetoric than for simple and lofty measures. Sarasate and Dengremont charmed me more; Wieniawski set my blood coursing faster; but in Joachim's presence I felt as if near some old Grecian temple hallowed by the presence of oft-worshipped gods.

Remenyi was a puzzle. He could play divinely, and scratch diabolically. He belonged to that old romantic school in which pose and gesture, contortion and grimace occupied a prominent place. I had an opportunity to study Remenyi (whose Austrian name was Hoffman) (1830–1898), at close quarters. He brought to my father's house in the early eighties his favourite instruments, and such a wild night of music I never heard. He played hour after hour, everything from Bach to Brahms — and incidentally scolded Brahms for "stealing" some of his, Remenyi's, Hungarian dances! (Which is a joke, as Brahms only followed the examples of Liszt and Joachim in avowedly employing Hungarian folk melodies). He did such tricks as dashing off in impeccable tune his arrangement of the D Flat Valse of Chopin in double notes at a terrific tempo. Violinists will understand the feat when I tell them that the key was the original one — D flat. He made the walls shiver when he struck his bow clangorously in the opening chords of the Rackoczy March. What a hero then seemed

this stout, little, prancing, baldheaded man with the face of an unfrocked priest. How he could talk in a half-dozen different languages; he had travelled enough and encountered enough celebrated people to fill a dozen volumes with his recollections. He was a violinist of unquestionable power; that he deteriorated in his later years was to have been expected. Liszt understood and appreciated Remenyi from the first; he nicknamed him "the Kossuth of the Fiddle."

To recall all the celebrities of the violin I have heard since 1870 would be hardly possible. I've forgotten most of them, though I do remember that wonderful boy, Maurice Dengremont, who ended his life, so rich in possibilities, it is said as a billiard marker. He was spoiled by women, for he was a comely lad. Another wonder-child kept his head, and today fascinating Fritz Kreisler is a master of masters and a favourite in America without peer. He first appeared at Boston and in 1888. In Paris I recall Marsick and his polished style; the gallant Sauret, Johannes Wolf, and the brilliant and elegant Timothée Adamowski. And in 1880, Marie Tayau and her woman quartet, a member of which was Jeanne Franko, the sister of the conductors and violinists, Sam Franko and Nahan Franko; Cæsar Thomson, the miraculous; C. M. Loeffler — subtle player, subtle composer; Sarasate with his sweet tone; Brodsky and his masculine manner;

Willy Burmester and his pallid pyrotechnics; the learned Schradieck, the Bohemian Ondricek, the dashing Ovide Musin, Bernhard Listemann, Carl Halir; Gregorowitsch, the languid; brilliant Marteau; Alexander Petschinikoff, the Russian; the musicianly Max Bendix; the astonishing John Rhodes, the wonder-worker Kubelik and his icy perfections; Kocian, Willy Hess, Efrem Zimbalist, Albert Spalding, Arthur Hartman, and a myriad of spoiled youths, Von Veczsey, Horszowski — all have crossed the map of my memory. And Franz Kneisel and the Kneisel Quartet, dispensers of musical joys for decades, but alas! no more. Alas! I would not barter memories of their music-making for a wilderness of virtuosi. I must not forget Joseph White, the Cuban violinist, who was with Theodore Thomas one season. His style was finished and Parisian. He was a mulatto and a handsome man. The night I heard him he played the Mendelssohn concerto, and at the beginning of the slow movement his chanterelle broke. Calmly he took concert master Richard Arnold's proffered instrument and triumphantly finished the composition.

Three violinists abide clear in my recollection: Wieniawski, Wilhelmj, and Ysaye. The last named is dearer because nearer, contrary to the supposed rule that the older the thing the worse it is. Ysaye is the magician of the violin. He holds us in a spell with that

elastic, curving bow of his, with those many coloured tones, tender, silky, sardonic, amorous, rich, and ductile. He interprets the classics as well as the romantics; Bach, Beethoven, Brahms; Vieuxtemps as well as Sibelius. Above all else, his mastery of the violin's technical mysteries, looms his musical temperament. He has imagination.

I have reserved the women for the last. A goodly, artistic company. It is not necessary to go back to the Milanolla sisters. We still cherish remembrances of Camilla Urso and her broad musicianly manner; the finished style of Normann-Neruda, Maris Soldat, the gifted and unhappy Arma Senkrah, Nettie Carpenter, Teresina Tua — who did not become a "Fiddle Fairy" when she visited us in 1887 — Leonora Jackson, Dora Becker, Olive Mead, and Maud Powell. In Europe many years ago, I heard Marcella Sembrich, who, after playing the E Flat Polonaise of Chopin on the piano, picked up a violin and dashed off the Wieniawski Polonaise; these feats were followed by songs, one being Viardot-Garcia's arrangement of Chopin's D Major Mazourka. Sembrich is the blue rose among great singers. Gericke, Paur, Nikisch were at first violinists; so was Fritz Scheel, late conductor of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. Franz Kneisel is a conductor of great skill; so is Frederick Stock, who followed Theodore Thomas as conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Theodore Spiering for-

merly concert-master of the Philharmonic orchestra proved himself an excellent conductor. But that a little Polish woman could handle with ease two instruments and sing like an angel besides, borders on the fantastic. Geraldine Morgan is an admirable violin artiste who plays solo as well as quartet with equal authority.

Maud Powell has fulfilled her early promise. She is a mature artiste, one who will never be finished because she will always study, always improve. A Joachim pupil, she is, nevertheless, a pupil of Maud Powell, and her playing reveals breadth, musicianship, beauty of tone and phrasing. She is our greatest American violin virtuosa.

I wrote this of Mischa Elman (the first of the many Mischas and Jaschas who mew on the fiddle strings) after I heard him play in London: "United to an amazing technical precision there is a still more amazing emotional temperament, all dominated by a powerful musical and mental intellect, uncanny in one not yet out of his teens. What need to add that his conception of Beethoven is neither as lovely as Kreisler's nor as fascinating as Ysaye's? Elman will mature. In the romantic or the virtuoso realm he is past master. His tone is lava-like in its warmth. He paints with many colours. He displays numberless nuances of feeling. The musical in him dominates the virtuoso. Naturally, the pride of hot youth asserts itself, and often, self-intoxicated, he

intoxicates his audiences with his sensuous, compelling tone. Hebraic, tragic, melancholy, the boisterousness of the Russian, the swift modulation from mad caprice to Slavic despair — Elman is a magician of many moods. When I listen to him I almost forget Ysaye." Yet when I heard Ysaye play last season it was Elman that I forgot for the moment. After all, a critic, too, may have his moods. And now comes another conqueror, the lad Jasha Heifetz from Russia, a pupil of Leopold Auer and an artist of such extraordinary attainments that the greatest among contemporary violinists — is it necessary to mention names? — have said of him that his art begins where theirs ends, and that they will shut up shop when he plays here. All of which is a flattering tribute, but it has been made before. Heifetz, however, may be the dark horse in the modern fiddle sweepstakes.

CHAPTER XXIX

RIDING THE WHIRLWIND

ONCE Swinburne, in a Baudelaire mood, sang: "Shall no new sin be born for men's troubles?" And it was an Asiatic potentate who offered a prize for the discovery of a new pleasure. Or was it a sauce?

Mankind soon wearies. The miracles of yesteryear are the commonplaces of to-day. Steam, telegraphy, electric motors, wireless, and now wireless telephony are accepted as a matter of course by the man in the street. How stale will seem woman suffrage and prohibition after they have conquered. In the world of art conditions are analogous. The cubist nail drove out the impressionist, and the cubist will vanish if the futurist hammer is sufficiently heavy.

Nevertheless, there is a novel sensation in store for those who make a first flight through the air. I don't mean in a balloon, whether captive or free; in the case of the former, a trip to the top of the Washington Monument or the Eiffel Tower will suffice; and while I rode in a Zeppelin at Berlin in 1912 (100 marks, or about $25, was the tariff) and saw Potsdam at my feet, yet I was unsatisfied. The passengers sat in a comfortable salon, ate,

drank, even smoked. The travelling was so smooth as to suggest an inland lake on a summer day. No danger was to be apprehended. The monster air-ship left its hangar and returned to it on schedule time. The entire trip lacked the flavour of adventure. And that leads me to a personal confession.

I am not a sport. In my veins flows sporting blood, but only in the Darwinian sense am I a "sport," a deviation from the normal history of my family, which has always been devoted to athletic pleasures. A baseball match in which carnage ensues is a mild diversion for me. I can't understand the fury of the contest. I yawn, though the frenzied enthusiasm of the spectators interests me. I have fallen asleep over a cricket match at Lord's in London, and the biggest bore of all was a Sunday afternoon bull-fight in Madrid. It was such a waste of potential beefsteaks. Prize-fights disgust, shell races are puerile, football matches smack of obituaries. As for golf — that is a prelude to senility, or the antechamber to an undertaker's establishment.

The swiftness of film pictures has set a new metronomic standard for modern sports. I suppose playing Bach fugues on the keyboard is as exciting a game as any; that is, for those who like it. A four-voiced polyphony at a good gait is positively hair-raising. It beats poker. All this is a preliminary to my little tale.

Conceive me as an elderly person of generous

waist measurement, slightly reckless like most near-sighted humans; this recklessness is psychical. Safety first, and I always watch my step; painful experience taught me years ago the perils that lurk in ambush for a Johnny-look-in-the-air.

Flying in heavier-than-air machines fascinated me. The fantastic stories of H. G. Wells were ever a joy. When the Argonauts of the Air appeared, flying was practically assured, although a Paris mathematician had demonstrated with ineluctable logic that it was impossible; as proved a member of the Institute a century earlier that birds couldn't fly. It was an illusion. Well, the Wrights flew, even if Langley did not — Langley, the genuine father of the aeroplane.

Living so long in France and Belgium, I had grown accustomed to the whirring of aerial motors, a sound not unlike that of a motor-boat or the buzzing of a sawmill. I became accustomed to this drone above the house-tops, and since my return to America I have often wondered why in the land where the aeroplane first flew, so little public interest was manifested. To be sure, there are aero clubs, but they never fly where the interest of the greater public can be intrigued. Either there is a hectic excitement over some record broken or else the aviator sulks in his tent. Is the money devil at the bottom of the trouble? Sport for sport's sake, like art for art's sake,

is rarely encountered. The government has taken up flying, but that is for pragmatic purposes. The aeroplane as a weapon of defence, not the aeroplane as a new and agreeable pleasure. We are not a disinterested nation; even symphony concerts and opera and the salvation of souls are commercial propositions. Else would our skies be darkened by flying machines instead of smoke, and our churches thronged with aviators.

Walking on the famous and fatiguing Boardwalk of Atlantic City I suddenly heard a familiar buzzing in the air and looked up. There it was, a big flying boat like a prehistoric dragonfly, speeding from the Inlet down to the million-dollar pier. Presently there were two of them flying, and I felt as if I were in a civilised land. On the trolleys were signs: "See the Flying Boats at the Inlet!" I did, the very next morning. I had no notion of being a passenger. I was not tempted by the thought. But as Satan finds work for idle hands, I lounged down the beach to the Kendrick biplane, and stared my full at its slender proportions. A young man in a bathing-suit explained to me the technique of flying, and insinuated that hundreds and hundreds had flown during the season without accident. Afternoon saw me again on the sands, an excited witness of a flight; excited because I stood behind the motor when it was started for a preliminary tryout — "tuning up" is the slang phrase of

the profession — and the cyclonic gale blew my hat away, loosened my collar, and made my teeth chatter.

Such a tornadic roar! I firmly resolved that never would I trust myself in such a devil's contrivance. Why, it was actually riding the whirlwind — and, perhaps, reaping a watery grave. What else but that? On a blast of air you sail aloft and along. When the air ceases you drop (less than forty-five miles an hour). And this in a flimsy box kite. Never for me! Not to-day, baker, call to-morrow with a crusty cottage! as we used to say in dear old "Lunnon" years ago. Nevertheless, the poison was in my veins; cunningly it began to work. I saw a passenger, a fat man, weighing two hundred and four pounds — I asked for the figures — trussed up like a calf in the arms of a slight, muscular youth, who carried him a limp burden and deposited him on a seat in the prow of the boat. I turned my head away. I am not easily stirred — having reported musical and theatrical happenings for a quarter of a century — but the sight of that stout male, a man and a brother (I didn't know him from Adam), evoked a chord of pity in my breast. I felt that I would never set eyes again on this prospective food for fishes. I quickly left the spot and returned to my hotel, determined to say, "Retro me, Sathanas!" if that personage should happen to show me his hoofs, horns, and hide.

But he did not. The devil is a subtle beast. He had simply set jangling the wires of suggestion, and my nerves accomplished the rest. One morning, a few days later, I awoke parched with desire. I drank much strong tea to steady me and smoked unremittingly. Again, during the early afternoon, I found myself up the beach. "My feet take hold on hell," I said to myself, but it was only hot sand. I teased myself with speculations as to whether the game was worth the candle — yes, I had got that far, traversing a vast mental territory between the No-Sayer and the Yes-Sayer. I was doomed, and I knew it when I began to circle about the machine.

Courteously the bonny youth explained matters. It was a Glenn H. Curtiss hydro-aeroplane, furnished with one of the new Curtiss engines of ninety horse-power, capable of flying seventy to ninety miles an hour, of lifting four hundred pounds, and weighing in all about a ton. Was it safe? Were the taut, skinny piano wires that manipulated the steering-gear and the plane durable? Didn't they ever snap? Of course they were durable, and, of course, they occasionally snapped. What then? Why, you drop, in spiral fashion — volplane — charming vocable! But if the engine? — same thing. You would come to earth, rather water, as naturally as a child takes the breast. Nothing to fear.

Young Beryl Kendrick is an Atlantic City

product — he was a professional swimmer and life-guard — and will look after you. The price is fifteen dollars; formerly twenty-five dollars, but competition, which is said to be the life of trade, had operated in favour of the public. Rather emotionally I bade my man good day, promising to return for a flight the next morning, a promise I certainly did not mean to keep. This stupendous announcement he received coolly. Flying to him was a quotidian banality.

And then I noticed that the blazing sun had become darkened. Was it an eclipse, or were some horrid, monstrous shapes like the suppositious spindles spoken of by Langley devouring the light of our parent planet? No, it was the chamber of my skull that was full of shadows. The obsession was complete. I would go up, but I must suffer terribly in the interim.

Why should I fly and pay fifteen good shekels for the unwelcome privilege? I computed the cost of various beverages, and as a consoling thought recalled Mark Twain's story of the Western editor who, missing from his accustomed haunts, was later found serenely drunk, passionately reading to a group of miners from a table his lantern-illuminated speech, in which he denounced the cruel raw waste of grain in the making of bread when so many honest men were starving for whisky. Yet did I feel that I would not begrudge my hard-earned royalties (I'm not a best-seller), and thus tor-

mented between the devil of cowardice and the deep sea of curiosity I retired and dreamed all night of fighting strange birds that attacked me in an aeroplane.

I shan't weary you with the further analysis of my soul-states during this tempestuous period. I ate a light breakfast, swallowed much tea. Then I resolutely went in company with a friend, and we boarded an Inlet car. I had the day previous resorted to a major expedient of cowards. I had said, so as to bolster up my fluttering resolution, that I was going to fly; an expedient that seldom misses, for I should never have been able to face the chief clerk, the head waiter, or the proprietor at the hotel if I failed to keep my promise.

"Boaster! Swaggerer!" I muttered to myself en route. "Now are you satisfied? Thou tremblest, carcass! Thou wouldst tremble much more if thou knewest whither I shall soon lead thee!" I quoted Turenne, and I was beginning to babble something about Icarus — or was it Phæton, or Simon Magus? — brought to earth in the Colosseum by a prayer from the lips of Saint Peter — when we arrived. How I hated the corner where we alighted. It seemed mean and dingy and sinister in the dazzling sunlight — a red-hot Saturday, September 11, 1915, and the hour was 10.30 A. M. A condemned criminal could not have noted more clearly every detail of the life he was about to quit. We ploughed through the

sand. We reached the scaffold — at least it looked like one to me. "Hello, here's a church. Let's go in," I felt like exclaiming in sheer desperation, remembering Dickens and Mr. Wemmick. I would have, such was my blue funk, quoted Holy Scripture to the sandlopers, but I hadn't the chance.

I asked my friend, and my voice sounded steady enough, whether the wind and weather seemed propitious for flying. Never better was the reply, and my heart went down to my boots. I really think I should have escaped if a stout man with a piratical moustache hadn't approached me and asked: "Going up today?" I marvelled at his calmness, and wished for his instant dissolution, but I gave an affirmative shake of the head. Cornered at last! Handing my watch, hat, and wallet to my friend, I coldly awaited the final preparations. I had forgotten my ear protector, but cotton-wool would answer the purpose of making me partially deaf to the clangorous vibration of the propeller blades — which resemble in a magnified shape the innocent air-fans of offices and cafés. I essayed one more joke — true gallows humour — before I was led like a lamb (a tough one) to the slaughter. I asked an attendant to whom I had paid the official fee if my widows would be refunded the money in case of accident; but this antique and tasteless witticism was indifferently received, as it deserved. Finally the young man gave me a raincoat,

grabbed me around the waist, and bidding me clasp his neck he carried me out into shallow water and sat me beside the air-pilot, who looked like a mere lad in his bathing-clothes. My hand must have been trembling (ah, that old piano hand), for he inquiringly eyed me. The motor was screaming as we flew through the water toward the Inlet. I hadn't courage of mind to make a farewell signal to my companion. Too late, we're off! I thought, and at once my trepidation vanished.

I had for some unknown reason, possibly because of absolute despair, suffered a rich sea-change. We churned the waves. I saw tiny sails studding the deep blue. Men fished from the shore. As we neared the Inlet, where a shambling wooden hotel stands on the sandy point, the sound of the motor grew intenser. We began to lift, not all at once, but gradually. Suddenly her nose poked skyward, and the boat climbed the air with an ease that was astonishing. No shock. No jerkiness. We simply glided aloft as if the sky were our native heath — you will pardon the Hibernicism — and as if determined to pay a visit to the round blazing sun bathing naked in the brilliant blue. And with the mounting ascent I became unconscious of my corporeal vesture. I had become pure spirit. I feared nothing. The legend of angels became a certainty. I was on the way to the Fourth Dimensional vista. I recalled Poincaré's suggestion that

there is no such thing as matter; only holes in the ether. Nature embracing a vacuum instead of abhorring it. A Swiss cheese universe. Joseph Conrad has said "Man on earth is an unforeseen accident which does not stand close investigation." But man in the air? Man is destined to wings. Was I not proving it? Flying is the sport of gods, and should be of humans now that the motor-car is become slightly "promiscuous."

The Inlet and thoroughfare at my feet were a network of silvery ribbons. The heat was terrific, the glare almost unbearable. But I no longer sneezed. Aviation solves the hay-fever problem. The wind forced me to clench my teeth. We were hurled along at seventy miles an hour, and up several thousand feet, yet below the land seemed near enough to touch. As we swung across the masts of yachts I wondered that we didn't graze them — so elusive was the crystal clearness of the atmosphere, a magic mirror that made the remote contiguous. The mast of the sunken schooner hard by the sand-bar looked like a lead-pencil one could grasp and write a message to Mars.

Hello! I was become lyrical. It is inescapable up in the air. The blood seethes. Ecstasy sets in; the kinetic ecstasy of a spinning-top. I gazed at the pilot. He twisted his wheel nonchalantly as if in an earthly automobile. I looked over the sides of the cedar boat and was not giddy, for I had lived years at the top of an apartment-

house, ten stories high, from which I daily viewed policemen killing time on the sidewalks; besides, I have strong eyes and the stomach of a drover. Therefore, no giddiness, no nausea. Only exaltation as we swooped down to lower levels. Atlantic City, bizarre, yet meaningless, outrageously planned and executed, stretched its ugly shape beneath us; the most striking objects were the exotic hyphenated hotel, with its Asiatic monoliths and dome, and its vast, grandiose neighbour, a mound of concrete, the biggest hotel in the world. The piers were salient silhouettes. A checker-board seemed the city, which modulated into a tremendous arabesque of ocean and sky. I preferred to stare seaward. The absorbent cotton in my ears was transformed into gun-cotton, so explosive the insistent drumming of the motor-engine. Otherwise, we flew on even keel, only an occasional dip and a sidewise swing reminding me that I wasn't footing the ordinary highway. The initial intoxication began to wear off, but not the sense of freedom, a glorious freedom; truly, mankind will not be free till all fly.

Alas! though we become winged we remain mortal. We may shed our cumbersome pedestrian habits, but we take up in the air with us our petty souls. I found myself indulging in very trite thoughts. What a pity that war should be the first to degrade this delightful and stimulating sport! Worse followed. Why

couldn't I own a machine? Base envy, you see. The socialistic leaven had begun to work. No use; we shall remain human even in heaven or hell.

I have been asked to describe the sensation of flying. I can't. It seems so easy, so natural. If you have ever dreamed of flying, I can only say that your dream will be realised in an aeroplane. Dreams do come true sometimes. (Curiously enough, I've not dreamed of flying since.) But as there is an end even to the most tedious story, so mine must finish.

Suddenly the sound of the engine ceased. The silence was thrilling, almost painful. And then in huge circles, as if we were descending the curves of an invisible corkscrew, we came down, the bow of the flying boat pointing at an angle of forty-five degrees. Still no dizziness, only a sense of regret that the trip was so soon over. It had endured an eternity, but occupied precisely twenty-one minutes.

We reached the water and settled on the foam like a feather. Then we churned toward the beach; again I was carried, this time on to solid land, where I had ridiculous trouble in getting the cotton from my harassed eardrums. Perhaps my hands were unsteady, but if they were, my feet were not.

I reached the Inlet via the Boardwalk, making record time, and drew the first happy sigh in a week as I sat down, lighted a cigar, and twiddled my fingers at a waiter. Even if I

had enjoyed a new pleasure I didn't propose to give up the old ones. Then my nerves! And when I meet Gabriele d'Annunzio I can look him in the eye. He flew over Trieste, but I flew over my fears — a moral as well as a physical victory for a timid conservative.

CHAPTER XXX

PRAYERS FOR THE LIVING

(From the editorial page of the New York *Sun*, December 31, 1916)

IT is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins; and it is as holy a prayer that begs from the god of chance his pity for the living. Aye! it is those who are about to live, not to die, that we should salute. Life is the eternal slayer; death is but the final punctuation of the vital paragraph. Life is also the betrayer. A cosmical conspiracy of deception encircles us. We call it Maya, and flatter our finite sense of humour that we are no longer entrapped by the shining appearance of things when we say aloud: Stay, thou art so subtle that we know you for what you are — the profoundest instinct of life: its cruel delight in pretending to be what it is not. We are now, all of us who think that we think, newly born Fausts with eyes unbandaged of the supreme blinders, Time and Space. Nature clothes the skeleton in a motley suit of flesh, but our supersharpened ears overhear the rattling of the bones. We are become so wise that love itself is no longer a sentiment, only a sensation; religion

is first cousin to voluptuousness; and if we are so minded we may jig to the tune of the stars up the dazzling staircase, and sneer at the cloud-gates of the infinite inane. Naught succeeds like negation, and we swear that in the house of the undertaker it is impolite to speak of shrouds. We are nothing if not determinists. And we believe that the devil deserves the hindmost.

We live in order to forget life. For our delicate machinery of apperception there is no longer right or wrong; vice and virtue are the acid and alkali of existence. And as too much acid deranges the stomach, so vice corrodes the soul, and thus we are virtuous by compulsion. Yet we know that evil serves its purpose in the vast chemistry of being, and if banished the consequences might not be for universal good; other evils would follow in the train of a too comprehensive mitigation, and our end a stale swamp of vain virtues. Resist not evil! Which may mean the reverse of what it seems to preach. The master modern immoralist has said: Embrace evil! that we may be over and done with it. Toys are our ideals; glory, goodness, wealth, health, happiness; all toys except health; health of the body, of the soul. And the first shall be last.

The human soul in health? But there is no spiritual health. The mystic, Doctor Tauler, has said: "God does not reside in a vigorous body"; sinister; nevertheless, equitable. The

dolorous certitude that the most radiant of existences ends in the defeat of disease and death; that happiness is relative, a word empty of meaning in the light of experience, and non-existent as an absolute; that the only divine oasis in our feverish activities is sleep; sleep the prelude to the profound and eternal silence — why then this gabble about soul-states and the peace that passeth all understanding? Simply because the red corpuscles that rule our destinies are, when dynamic, mighty breeders of hope; if the powers and principalities of darkness prevail, our guardian angels, the phagocytes, are dominated by the leucocytes. Gods and devils, Ormuzd and Ahriman, and other phantasms of the sky, may all be put on a microscopic slide and their struggles noted. And the evil ones are ever victors in the diabolical game. No need to insist on it. In the heart of mankind there is a tiny shrine with its burning taper; the idol is Self; the propitiatory light is for subliminal foes. Alas! in vain. We succumb, and in our weakness we sink into the grave. If only we were sure of the River Styx afterward we should pay the ferry-tax with joy. Better Hades than the poppy of oblivion. "Ready to be anything in the ecstasy of being ever," as Sir Thomas Browne sagely remarks.

The pious and worthy Doctor Jeremy Taylor, who built cathedral-like structures of English prose to the greater glory of God and for the

edification of ambitious rhetoricians, has dwelt upon the efficacy of prayer in a singularly luminous passage: "Holy prayer procures the ministry and services of angels. It rescinds the decrees of God. It cures sickness and obtains pardon. It arrests the sun in its course and stays the wheels of the chariot of the moon. It rules over all God's creatures and opens and shuts the storehouses of rain. It unlocks the cabinet of the womb and quenches the violence of fire. It stops the mouths of lions and reconciles our sufferance and weak faculties with the violence of torment and sharpness of persecution. It pleases God and supplies all our needs. But prayer that can do this much for us can do nothing at all without holiness, for God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God and doth His will, him He heareth."

It should not be forgotten that Taylor, perhaps the greatest English prose-master save John Milton, was a stickler for good works as well as faith. He was considered almost heterodox because of his violence of speech when the subject of death-bed repentance became a topic of discussion; indeed, his bishop remonstrated with him because of his stiff-necked opinions. To joust through life as at a pleasure tournament and when the dews of death dampen the forehead to call on God in your extremity seemed to this eloquent divine an act of slinking cowardice. Far better face the evil one in a defiant spirit than knock for

admittance at the back door of paradise and try to sneak by the winged policeman into a vulgar bliss: unwon, unhoped for, undeserved. Therefore the rather startling statement, "God heareth not sinners," read in the light of Bishop Taylor's fervent conception of man's duty, hath its justification.

But this atmosphere of proverbial commonplaces and "inspissated gloom" should not be long maintained when the coursers of the sun are plunging southward in the new year; when the Huntsman is up at Oyster Bay and "they are already past their first sleep in Persia." What a bold and adventurous piece of nature is man; yet how he stares at life as a frowning entertainment. Why must we "act our antipodes" when "all Africa and her prodigies are in us"? Ergo, let us be cheerful. God is with the world. Let us pray that during the ensuing year no rust shall colour our soul into a dingy red. Let us pray for the living that they may be loosed from their politics and see life steadily and whole.

Let us pray that we may not take it on ourselves to feel holier than our neighbours. Let us pray that we be not cursed with the itching desire to reform our fellows, for the way of the reformer is hard, and he always gets what he deserves: the contempt of his fellow men. He is usually a hypocrite. Let us pray that we are not struck by religious zeal; religious people are not always good people; good people are

not envious, jealous, penurious, censorious, or busybodies, or too much bound up in the prospect of the mote in their brother's eye and unmindful of the beam in their own. Furthermore, good people do not unveil with uncharitable joy the faults of women. Have faith. Have hope, and remember that charity is as great as chastity.

Let us pray for the misguided folk who, forgetful of Mother Church, her wisdom, her consolations, flock to the tents of lewd, itinerant, mumbo-jumbo howlers, that blaspheme the sacred name as they epileptically leap, shouting glory-kingdom-come and please settle at the captain's office.

Though they run on all fours and bark as hyenas, they shall not enter the city of the saints, being money-changers in the Temple, and tripe-sellers of souls. Better Tophet and its burning pitch than a wilderness of such apes of God. Some men and women of culture and social position indorse these sorry buffoons, the apology for their paradoxical conduct being any port in a storm; any degrading circus, so it be followed by a mock salvation. But salvation for whom? What deity cares for such foaming at the mouth, such fustian? Conversion is silent and comes from within, and not to the din of brass-bands and screaming hallelujahs. It takes all sorts of gods to make the cosmos, but why return to the antics and fetishes of our primate ancestors, the cave-

dwellers? This squirming and panting and brief reform "true religion"? On the contrary it is a throwback to bestiality, to the vilest instincts. A "soul" that has to be saved by such means is a soul not worth the saving. To the discard with it, where, flaming in purgatorial fires, it may be refashioned for future reincarnation on some other planet.

Abuse of drink is to be deplored, but Prohibition is more enslaving than alcohol. Paganism in its most exotic forms is preferable to this prize-ring Christianity. One may be zealous without wallowing in debasing superstition. Again, let us pray for these imbeciles and for the charlatans who are blinding them. Neither arts and sciences nor politics and philosophies will save the soul. The azure route lies beyond the gates of ivory and the gates of horn.

Let us pray for our sisters, the suffragettes, who are still suffering from the injustice of Man, now some million of years. Let us pray that they be given the ballot to prove to them its utter futility as a cure-all. With it they shall be neither happier nor different. Once a woman, always a martyr. Let them not be deceived by illusive phrases. If they had not been oppressed they would to-day be "free"! Alas! free from their sex? Free from the burden of family? Free like men to carry on the rude labours of this ruder earth? To what purpose? To become second-rate men, when

nature has endowed them with qualities that men vainly emulate, vainly seek to evoke their spirit in the arts and literature! Ages past woman should have attained that impossible goal, oppression or no; in fact, adversity has made man what he is — and woman, too. Pray, that she may not be tempted by the mirage into the desert, there to perish of thirst for the promised land. Nearly a century ago George Sand was preaching the equality of the sexes, and rightly enough. What has come of it? The vote? Political office? Professions, business opportunities? Yes, all these things, but not universal happiness. Woman's sphere — stale phrase! — is any one she hankers after; but let her not deceive herself. Her future will strangely resemble her past.

William Dean Howells was not wrong when he wrote: Woman has only her choice in self-sacrifice. And sometimes not even the choosing. Why? Why are eclipses? Why are some men prohibitionists? Why do hens cluck after laying eggs? Let us pray for warring women that their politically ambitious leaders may no longer dupe them with fallacious promises — surely a "pathetic fallacy." But, then, females rush in where fools fear to tread.

And lastly, beloved sisters and brothers, let us heartily pray that our imperial democracy (or is it a democratic empire?), our plutocratic republic (or should we say republican plutocracy?) may be kept from war; avoid

"the drums and tramplings of three conquests." But by the Eternal Jehovah, God of battles, if we are forced to fight, then let us fight like patriotic Americans, and not gently coo, like pacifists and other sultry south winds. A billion for "preparedness," but not a penny for "pork," say we.

And by the same token let us pray that those thundering humbugs and parasites who call themselves labour leaders — the blind leading the blind — for ever vanish. Because of their contumacious acts and egregious bamboozling of their victims, because of their false promises of an earthly paradise and a golden age, they deserve the harshest condemnation.

Like certain Oriental discourses, our little Morality which began in the mosque has rambled not far from the tavern. Nevertheless, let us pray for the living as well as the dead. Oremus!

What some distinguished writers have said of them:

Maurice Maeterlinck wrote, May 15, 1905: "Do you know that 'Iconoclasts' is the only book of high and universal critical worth that we have had for years—to be precise, since Georg Brandes. It is at once strong and fine, supple and firm, indulgent and sure."

And of "Ivory Apes and Peacocks" he said, among other things: "I have marvelled at the vigilance and clarity with which you follow and judge the new literary and artistic movements in all countries. I do not know of criticism more pure and sure than yours." (October, 1915.)

"The Mercure de France translated the other day from Scribner's one of the best studies which have been written on Stendhal for a long time, in which there was no evasion of the question of Stendhal's immorality. The author of that article, James Huneker, is, among foreign critics, the one best acquainted with French literature and the one who judges us with the greatest sympathy and with the most freedom. He has protested with force in numerous American journals against the campaign of defamation against France, and he has easily proved that those who participate in it are ignorant and fanatical." —"*Promenades Littéraires*" (*Troisième Série*), *Remy de Gourmont.* (Translated by Burton Rascoe for the Chicago *Tribune.*)

Paul Bourget wrote, Lundi de Paques, 1909, of "Egoists": "I have browsed through the pages of your book and found that you touch in a sympathetic style on diverse problems, artistic and literary. In the case of Stendhal your catholicity of treatment is extremely rare and courageous."

Dr. Georg Brandes, the versatile and profound Danish critic, wrote: "I find your breadth of view and its expression more European than American; but the essential thing is that you are an artist to your very marrow."

BEDOUINS

Mary Garden; Debussy; Chopin or the Circus; Botticelli; Poe; Brahmsody; Anatole France; Mirbeau; Caruso on Wheels; Calico Cats; the Artistic Temperament; Idols and Ambergris; With the Supreme Sin; Grindstones; A Masque of Music, and The Vision Malefic.

"Indeed, Mr. Huneker knows the magic of turning the commonest fact of literature or art into a gorgeous fiction. . . . 'Bedouins,' like all of the author's books, is a thing apart in our literature."—BENJAMIN DE CASSERES, *New York Times.*

"If there is ever a real culture in this country its roots will run in many directions; but historians will not dig very far before they run across the Huneker-root, not only because of its tremendous vitality and world-tentacles, but because of its stark individualism and militant sap. He is the greatest of patriots who raises the intellectual levels of his country; and James Huneker is therefore, to me, the greatest of living Americans."—*Musical America.*

IVORY APES AND PEACOCKS

"His critical tact is well-nigh infallible. . . . His position among writers on æsthetics is anomalous and incredible: no merchant traffics in his heart, yet he commands a large, an eager, an affectionate public. Is it because he is both vivid and acute, robust yet fine-fingered, tolerant yet unyielding, astringent yet tender—a mellow pessimist, a kindly cynic? Or is it rather because he is, primarily, a temperament—dynamic, contagious, lovable, inveterately alive—expressing itself through the most transparent of the arts?"

—LAWRENCE GILMAN, in *North American Review* (October, 1915).

NEW COSMOPOLIS

"Mr. James Huneker, critic of music in the first place, is a craftsman of diverse accomplishment who occupies a distinctive and distinguished place among present-day American essayists. He is intensely 'modern,' well read in recent European writers, and not lacking sympathy with the more rebellious spirits. He flings off his impressions at fervent heat; he is not ashamed to be enthusiastic; and he cannot escape that large sentimentality which, to less disciplined transatlantic writers, is known nakedly as 'heart interest.' Out of his chaos of reading and observation he has, however, evolved a criticism of life that makes for intellectual cultivation, although it is of a Bohemian rather than an academic kind."—*London Athenæum* (November 6, 1915).

UNICORNS

"The essays are short, full of a satisfying—and fascinating—crispness, both memorable and delightful. And they are full of fancy, too, of the gayest humor, the quickest appreciation, the gentlest sympathy, sometimes of an enchanting extravagance."

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—HAROLD E. GORST, in *London Saturday Review* (Dec. 8, 1906).

VISIONARIES

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—*London Academy* (Feb. 3, 1906).

ICONOCLASTS: A Book of Dramatists

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"Mr. Huneker is, in the best sense, a critic; he listens to the music and gives you his impressions as rapidly and in as few words as possible; or he sketches the composers in fine, broad, sweeping strokes with a magnificent disregard for unimportant details. And as Mr. Huneker is, as I have said, a powerful personality, a man of quick brain and an energetic imagination, a man of moods and temperament—a string that vibrates and sings in response to music—we get in these essays of his a distinctly original and very valuable contribution to the world's tiny musical literature."

—J. F. RUNCIMAN, in *London Saturday Review.*

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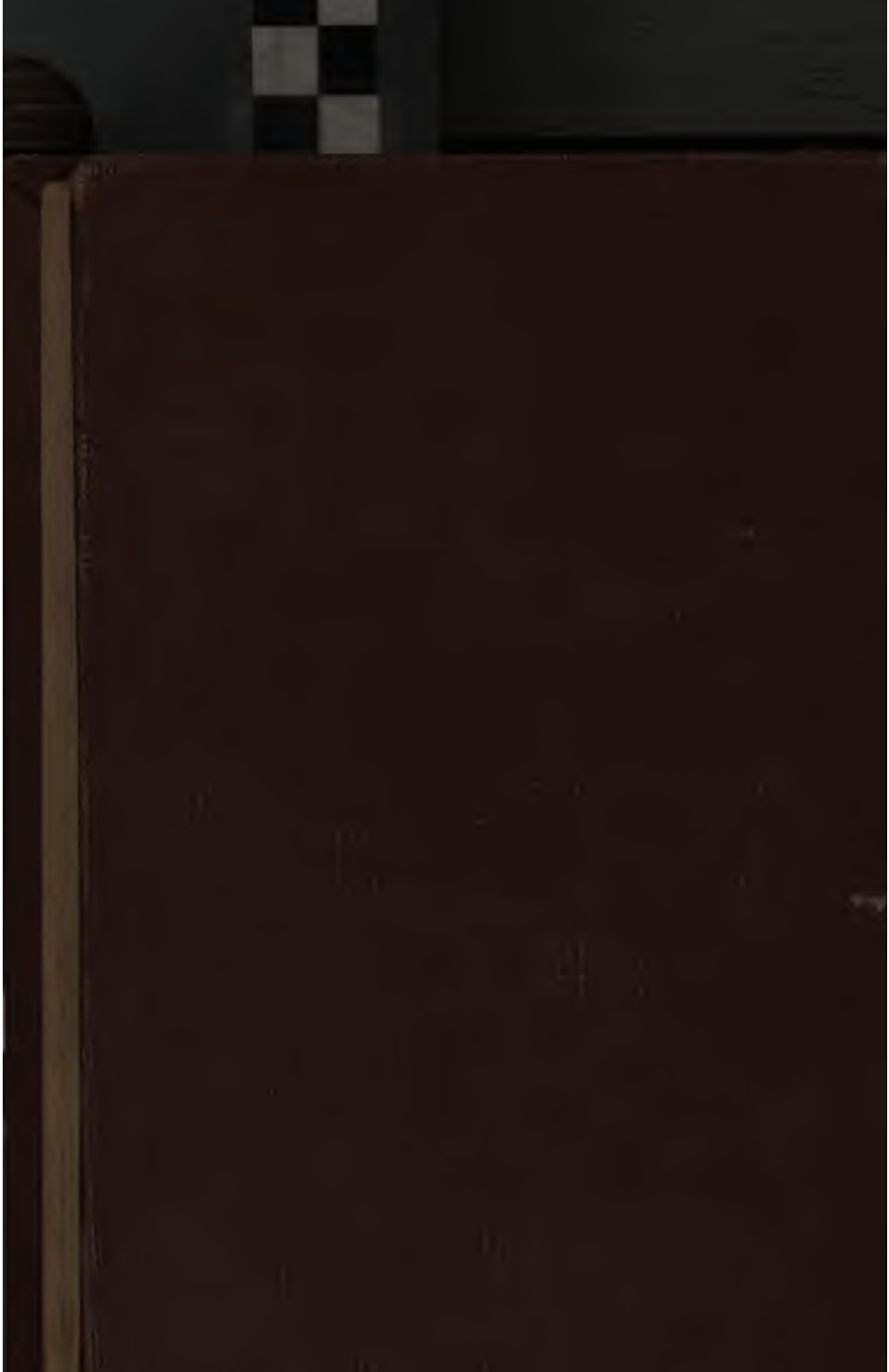
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